



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

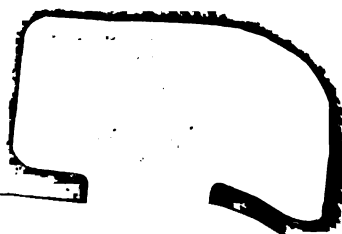
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



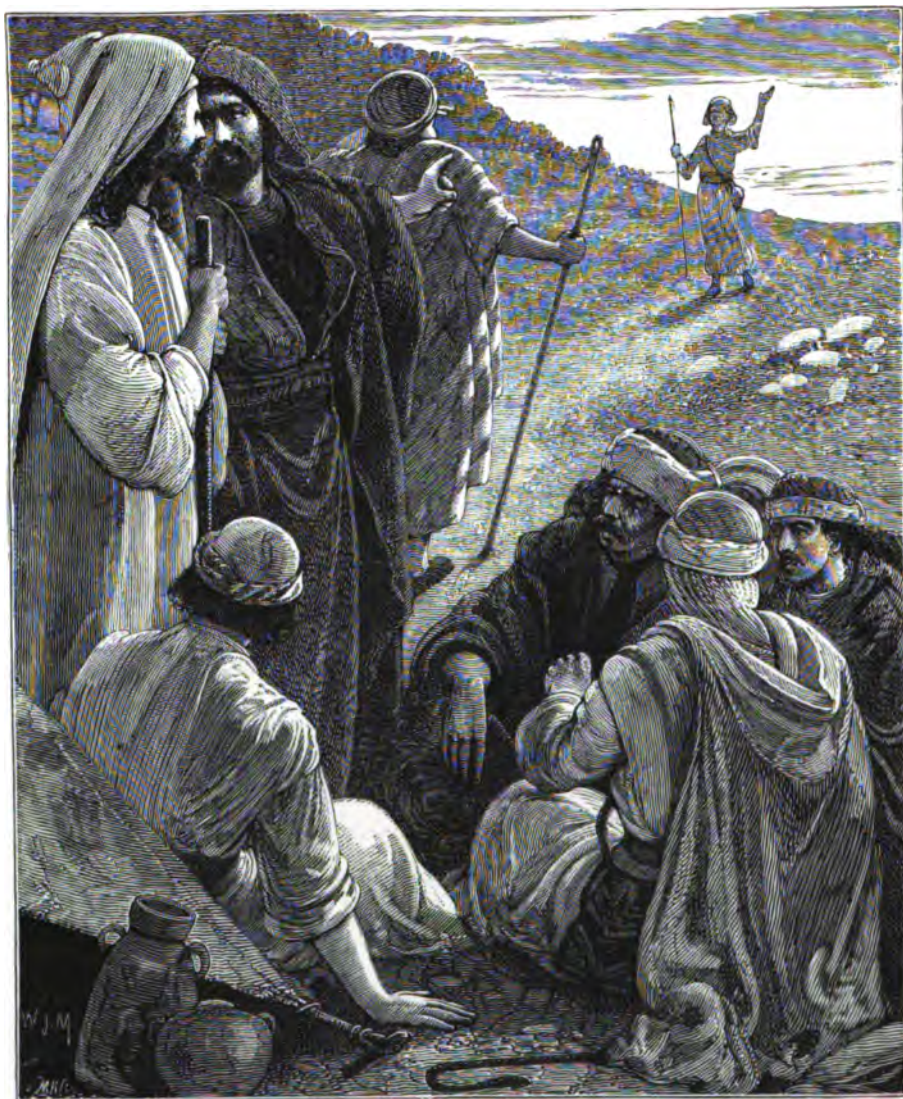
BIBLE STORIES  
Simply Told











JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

*"Behold, this dreamer cometh."*

GEN. xxxvii. 19.

# BIBLE STORIES SIMPLY TOLD.

---

## The Old Testament.



DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH AND HIS HOST.

---

*THOMAS NELSON AND SONS,*  
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

2524 . e . 14





# BIBLE STORIES SIMPLY TOLD.

---

## The Old Testament.

*By*

*M. E. CLEMENTS,*

*Author of "The Story of the Beacon Fire," "Sheltering Arms,"  
&c. &c.*

---

WITH 70 ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

*London:*

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

---

1885.



## **Contents.**

---

### **About the Old World.**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| I. HOW GOD MADE ALL THINGS, ... .. | 9  |
| II. IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, ... ..  | 14 |
| III. CAIN AND ABEL, ... ..         | 21 |
| IV. HOW GOD SAVED NOAH, ... ..     | 27 |
| V. AFTER THE FLOOD, ... ..         | 36 |

---

### **The Patriarchs.**

|                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| I. THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL, ... ..  | 43 |
| II. THE SON OF PROMISE, ... ..         | 49 |
| III. THE STORY OF A BIRTHRIGHT, ... .. | 58 |
| IV. JACOB'S JOURNEY, ... ..            | 63 |
| V. JOSEPH'S TROUBLES, ... ..           | 69 |
| VI. JOSEPH'S GREATNESS, ... ..         | 76 |
| VII. JOSEPH'S JOY, ... ..              | 82 |

---

### **The Rescue from Egypt.**

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| I. HOW MOSES WAS SAVED, ... ..        | 91  |
| II. WHAT MOSES DID IN EGYPT, ... ..   | 96  |
| III. GOING FORTH OUT OF EGYPT, ... .. | 104 |
| IV. ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF, ... ..         | 112 |



## List of Illustrations.

---

|                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| ADAM NAMING THE ANIMALS, ... ..                    | 12  |
| ADAM AND EVE PUT OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN, ... .. | 17  |
| ABEL'S SACRIFICE, ... ..                           | 23  |
| THE BUILDING OF THE ARK, ... ..                    | 29  |
| RETURN OF THE DOVE TO THE ARK, ... ..              | 32  |
| THE ANIMALS ENTERING THE ARK, ... ..               | 33  |
| MOUNT ARARAT, ... ..                               | 35  |
| NOAH'S SACRIFICE, ... ..                           | 37  |
| LOT FLEEING FROM SODOM, ... ..                     | 47  |
| ABRAHAM OFFERING UP ISAAC, ... ..                  | 51  |
| REBEKAH AND ABRAHAM'S SERVANT, ... ..              | 53  |
| JACOB'S DREAM, ... ..                              | 64  |
| JOSEPH TELLING HIS DREAM, ... ..                   | 70  |
| JOSEPH CAST INTO THE PIT, ... ..                   | 72  |
| JOSEPH'S COAT BROUGHT TO JACOB, ... ..             | 74  |
| JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAMS, ... ..       | 79  |
| FINDING OF THE MONEY, ... ..                       | 83  |
| MEETING OF JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN, ... ..             | 84  |
| MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH, ... ..                | 88  |
| FINDING OF MOSES, ... ..                           | 93  |
| MOSES HIDING THE EGYPTIAN IN THE SAND, ... ..      | 95  |
| MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH, ... ..                  | 97  |
| THE PLAGUE OF FROGS, ... ..                        | 99  |
| THE PLAGUE OF LIGHTNING AND HAIL, ... ..           | 100 |
| MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH, ... ..             | 102 |
| PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA, ... ..                     | 106 |
| DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH AND HIS HOST, ... ..        | 107 |
| GATHERING MANNA, ... ..                            | 108 |
| THE WATER BURSTING FROM THE ROCK, ... ..           | 109 |
| THE RETURN OF THE SPIES, ... ..                    | 113 |
| THE BRAZEN SERPENT, ... ..                         | 117 |

|                                                                |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| MOSES LOOKING DOWN UPON THE PROMISED LAND, ... ..              | 119 |
| JOSHUA AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST, ... ..              | 122 |
| RAHAB HIDING THE SPIES, ... ..                                 | 123 |
| THE PRIESTS BLOWING THE TRUMPETS, ... ..                       | 125 |
| GIDEON THRASHING CORN, ... ..                                  | 130 |
| GIDEON'S ALTAR, ... ..                                         | 132 |
| GIDEON'S ARMY DRINKING AT THE BROOK, ... ..                    | 133 |
| GIDEON'S ATTACK ON THE MIDIANITES, ... ..                      | 135 |
| SAMSON'S DEATH, ... ..                                         | 140 |
| THE ARK, ... ..                                                | 142 |
| HIGH PRIEST, ... ..                                            | 143 |
| "SAMUEL! SAMUEL!" ... ..                                       | 144 |
| SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID, ... ..                                 | 151 |
| DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL, ... ..                              | 155 |
| DAVID AS A SHEPHERD, ... ..                                    | 157 |
| GOLIATH DEFYING THE ISRAELITES, ... ..                         | 158 |
| DAVID AND GOLIATH, ... ..                                      | 160 |
| DAVID RETURNING FROM THE BATTLE WITH THE PHILISTINES, ... ..   | 163 |
| THE FAREWELL MEETING OF JONATHAN AND DAVID, ... ..             | 165 |
| JONATHAN PLEADING FOR DAVID, ... ..                            | 166 |
| DAVID SHOWING THE KING'S SPEAR AND CRUSE, ... ..               | 167 |
| ABSALOM IN ARMS AGAINST DAVID, ... ..                          | 171 |
| ABSALOM CAUGHT IN THE OAK, ... ..                              | 174 |
| THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON, ... ..                                | 178 |
| SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, ... ..                                       | 179 |
| SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, ... ..                         | 181 |
| OBADIAH FEEDING THE PROPHETS, ... ..                           | 185 |
| ELIJAH FED BY THE RAVENS, ... ..                               | 187 |
| ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN, ... ..                              | 193 |
| DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS LIVING ON PULSE AND WATER, ... ..    | 201 |
| DANIEL TELLING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HIS DREAM, ... ..                | 204 |
| SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR, ... .. | 206 |
| THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL, ... ..                            | 210 |
| DANIEL PRAYING, ... ..                                         | 212 |
| DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS, ... ..                             | 213 |



# ABOUT THE OLD WORLD.

---

## I.

### HOW GOD MADE ALL THINGS.



ONCE, a long, long time ago, there was no one living on the earth that is now so full of people.

There were no living things at all here; no cattle, no wild beasts, no birds, no butterflies or insects of any kind, and no fishes in the sea.

Before that there were no green growing things here; no grass, no trees, no flowers.

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.

In the beginning was a time so long ago that no one knows when it was.

For a while the earth was shapeless and empty, not yet fit for anything to live in; and there was no light in it.

Then came the time when God began to make it a beautiful world, fit for men, and women, and children, and all sorts of birds, and beasts, and fishes to live and be happy in. This was done in six days or periods of time.

On the *first day* God said, Let there be *light*: and there was light.



God saw the light, that it was good ; and God divided the light from the darkness.

God also called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And the evening and the morning were the first day.

But the earth was still covered with water, and the light showed nothing but emptiness and confusion.

On the *second day* God made the *firmament*, or the sky, and called it Heaven.

And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Under this sky there was only water still, covering all the earth ; there was no place for green things to grow in.

On the *third day* God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear : and it was so.

God called the dry land *Earth* ; and the gathering together of the waters called he *Seas* : and God saw that it was good.

Then God made *grass* and *herbs* and *trees* to grow out of the land. And God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day.

The earth was now becoming very beautiful. Grass and trees and flowers covered all the dry land.

It was fast getting ready for the living things that were to live in it ; for the herb bearing seed,—I think that means corn,—and fruit-trees with fruit upon them had begun to grow.

It was a strange, silent world yet. No voice of any animal was heard in it, no singing of birds or humming of insects, no sound of any living thing, only the waving and rustling of the beautiful trees, and the flowing of streams, and the waterfalls, and the waves breaking on the shore.

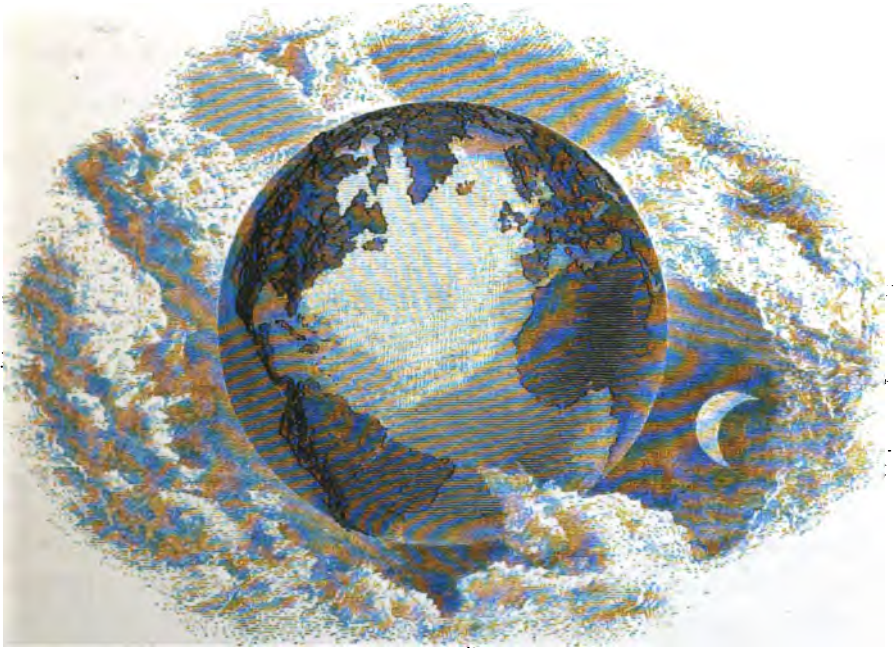
On the *fourth day* God made two great *lights* ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : he made the stars also.

God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness : and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

So now there were the sun by day and the moon and the stars by night shining down out of the sky upon this beautiful, green, silent world.

On the *fifth day* God made *fishes* and all creatures that live in the water ; and he made *birds* to fly in the air ; so that the earth was no longer without living things in it. And God saw that it was good.



When he had made them, he blessed them, so that there should be a great many of them, and that all the sea should be filled with living things, as it is to-day, and that there should be birds flying everywhere over the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

On the *sixth day* God made all sorts of *beasts* and *cattle*, great and small, and *insects*, and everything that lives on the land, except birds, which had been made on the fifth day. And God saw that it was good.

Afterwards, on this sixth day, when all these living things had been made on the earth, when birds were flying in the air and fishes were swimming in

the sea, when green grass and herbs were growing, and flowers were blooming, and fruit-trees were laden with their fruit, and all things were ready



ADAM NAMING THE ANIMALS.

for people to live and be happy here, then God made the *first man* and the *first woman* on the earth.

God made man in his own image, after his own likeness. He formed him of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God put the man that he had made into a garden where there grew every tree that is pleasant to the eye and good for food. And he called the man Adam.

Then God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

So all the birds and beasts and living things that had been made were brought to Adam that he might give them names; but among them all there was no one that could be a companion to him—nothing that could speak to him, or help him in anything he wanted to do.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the

rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Then God blessed them, and told them that they and their children were to fill the earth with people, and that they were the masters and owners of everything in the earth.

All the other things that God had made he gave to the man and woman to be theirs.

He said to them, Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

God gave them the herb bearing seed and every kind of fruit for their food. To the animals he gave the grass and green herbs for their food.

God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all that was made was beautiful and good.

When the seventh day came, God made no more new things. He rested from his work ; and he blessed the seventh day, and called it holy.

## II.

### IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.



O Adam and his wife was given all this beautiful new world where everything was very good.

They lived in a garden called Eden, which was the most beautiful part of it all.

In this garden God had made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the eye and good for food; and there was a river flowing through it to give them water.

Adam was put into this garden to dress it and to keep it; and he had his wife to help him.

There they were glad and happy all the time, for they were quite good. They did not know anything about being bad.

There was no need to say to them, You must not tell lies, or, You must not be unkind to each other, or, You must not be cruel to the dumb animals that God has given to you; for they had never heard or thought of such things; they did not know how to do them.

There was no need to say to them, You must love each other, or, You must love God; for they did love each other very dearly, and they loved God with all their hearts.

They were no more afraid of God's presence, and of hearing him speak to them, than children, when good, are afraid to run and meet their father. They were glad when God was with them, and when they could speak with him, just as good children are glad and happy with fathers and mothers who love them. For God loves all the creatures he has made, just as good fathers

and mothers love their children ; only God's love is greater—so great that all the love in the world comes out of it.

Well, God never told Adam and his wife not to do those bad things that you and I have to be warned not to do. As I have told you, they did not know anything about them.

God, however, gave them one command. He told them there was one tree in the garden that they must never eat the fruit of. Every other tree they might eat the fruit of—whenever they chose ; but if they ate of that tree, they should surely die.

This tree was in the midst of the garden, and it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That meant that if Adam and his wife ate the fruit of it they would then not only know how to do bad things, but they would often wish to do them.

Now Adam and his wife had an enemy. Satan hated them. He did not like to see them good and happy.

Why he hated them I cannot tell you ; but I know that he hates all the people in the world still, and is always trying to make us bad and to do us harm.

One day Satan came and spoke to the woman. He looked like a serpent—for Satan is quite different from us.

The serpent said to the woman, Has God indeed said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden ?

The woman answered and said, We may eat of the trees of the garden ; but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Then the serpent said, Ye shall not surely die.

Satan always tells lies. He often tells people that God does not mean what he has said. He tries to make them doubt God and disobey him.

He told the woman that the fruit of that tree would make them wise, and that God did not want them to be wise.

The woman was persuaded. She took some of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and ate it ; and then she gave some to Adam, and he also ate it.



When they had eaten it they were no longer good and pure ; they had disobeyed God. They knew now all about sin and wickedness ; knew how to tell lies and to be unkind.

They did not want to meet God now ; they were afraid. When they heard his voice in the garden they tried to hide themselves.

But they could not hide from God ; and it was a good thing for them that they could not, although he was going to punish them.

God called to Adam, and said to him, Where art thou ?

And Adam said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself.



Then God said, Who told thee that thou wast naked ? Hast thou eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat ?

The man answered and said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that thou hast done ?

The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I did eat.

God then spoke to the serpent, and said that he was cursed for what he had done ; that he should creep

along the ground in the dust always ; and that there should be hatred between Satan and the people in the world. Satan should always hate



ADAM AND EVE PUT OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN.





them and try to do them harm ; but that some day One should come into the world to overcome Satan. Satan should struggle with this Person and hurt him ; but in the end he should overcome Satan, and take away all his power to hurt people.

Then God said to the woman that she must in future have a great deal of sorrow and pain. But God promised that in all this pain and sorrow he would give her children to comfort her.

To Adam God said that the ground was cursed for his sake: that thorns and thistles should now grow in it ; that he should have hard, weary work to get his bread from it as long as he lived ; and that at last he should die, and turn again into the dust from which he was made.

Then God sent Adam and his wife away out of the beautiful garden of Eden, to till the ground outside. He placed an angel at the gate of Eden, and the angel had a flaming sword that turned every way.

This was the beginning of all the sin and naughtiness, of all the trouble and pain and weariness, that have ever been in the world and that are in it still.

Perhaps you wonder why I said that it was a good thing that this first man and woman could not hide themselves from God or get away from him.

Well, God did indeed punish them sorely for their disobedience ; but he did not give up loving them, and taking care of them.

He has not given it up yet ; for he is the same still to us, who are their children.

It is quite true that to this day thorns and thistles will grow in the ground where it is not well tilled, so that men must work hard to get their bread, and they are often weary. But God makes corn and fruit to grow when men have worked for them ; and work keeps people from being as bad as they would become if they were idle ; and so do pain and sorrow and death.

You don't understand this, my little friends ?

No, I did not expect you would. But you *can* understand, I think, that though there is a great deal of pain and punishment in the world, because of sin, yet our life is not all pain and punishment—far from it.

Our Father who is in heaven gives us a great many good and beautiful things, and many nice happy days. And though people must die at last, yet you and I have been told about the heavenly home that our Saviour has prepared for us. Have you not heard that—

“ There's a home for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,  
Where Jesus reigns in glory,  
A home of peace and joy :  
No home on earth is like it,  
Nor can with it compare ;  
For every one is happy,  
Nor can be happier there.”

### III.

## CAIN AND ABEL.



WHEN Adam and his wife were sent away out of Eden, I think the greatest comfort they had was that God had said to the woman that in all their pain and sorrow he would give them children. They liked to know that though they should die there would still be men and women in the world.

Adam, therefore, called his wife's name Eve, which means *life*, because she was the mother of all living.

Why do you think it was a comfort to them to have children? Why did they like to think there would be plenty of people in the world, when they knew that no one could live here without having hard work and many troubles, and at last dying and turning into dust again?

Well, in the first place, God has put it into people to take pleasure in their children, and I suppose it is because people love their children so much that they are comforted by them; for love in our hearts always feels nice, and it makes us better too.

There was another reason why Adam and Eve should think a great deal about the children God was going to send them.

Don't you remember how God had said that some one should be born into the world who should overcome Satan?

Now, you know Satan hates the people in the world, and wants to make them wicked and miserable, and has brought death upon them. That is his work. Therefore the Person who came to overcome Satan makes people good and happy, and gives them life. That is the work of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It was of him God had spoken. And though Adam and Eve did not know all that we have been told about him, yet they knew that God was promising them something very good and merciful, and they longed to see the one who was to destroy the terrible works of Satan.

Therefore when God gave them a little boy they were glad. And Eve said, I have gotten a man from the Lord; and she called his name Cain, which means *gotten*.

When she saw her first child she knew that God was remembering his promise, and that though it might still be a long time off, yet some day the promised one would surely come to save the world from sin and death.

Cain was the very first baby that came into the world. After a while he had a brother called Abel. When these two grew up, Cain was a tiller of the ground—that is, he sowed corn and vegetables, and gathered them when they were ripe; and Abel kept sheep.

Now, I never like having to tell sad things, especially to little children; and yet the story of these brothers which I have to tell you here is one of the saddest that I know.

The first child that came into this world grew up to be a bad man. I never heard whether he was a very naughty boy, but I don't think he ever had any love for God in his heart, or any wish to do right. He hated his brother Abel, and the only reason why he hated him was that Abel was a good man.

One day Cain and Abel came to worship God. Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground—that is, some of the things that had grown in his fields—and Abel brought of the best of his flock.

God was pleased with Abel and his offering; but with Cain and his offering he was not pleased.

Then Cain grew angry, and his face looked frowning and wicked.

And God said to Cain, Why are you angry? and why do you frown? If you do well, shall not I be pleased with you too?

For all that, Cain did not repent or change his wicked ways. His heart became full of anger and hatred against Abel; and one day, when he met his brother in the field, he rose up against him and killed him.



ABEL'S SACRIFICE.



Then God said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother ?

And Cain said, I know not : am I my brother's keeper ?

But God said, What hast thou done ? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Cain knew then that he could not hide his sin from God.

And God said to him that the ground should no more give him corn and fruit when he tilled it ; that he should have to wander away from his home far off upon the earth, and be a runaway and a wanderer all his life.

Then Cain said, My punishment is greater than I can bear. I am driven away from my home and from the presence of God. I shall be a runaway and a wanderer on the earth ; and any one that finds me shall kill me.

God then said that any one who killed Cain should be punished sevenfold. And he set a mark on Cain, lest any one finding him should kill him.

Would God have forgiven Cain that great sin, and made him good, if Cain had asked him ?

My little friends, I cannot find that Cain ever *did* ask to be forgiven. The Bible never says he did ; and I don't think he wanted to be made good. It never says he was a bit sorry for what he had done ; he was only sorry to be punished. What it does say about him is that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.

That makes me think that though people never can hide their sins from God, they can, if they choose, keep far away from him, and keep everything good out of their hearts, and never care a bit whether God is pleased with them or not.

This is indeed a dangerous thing to do, and about as wise as it would be for one of you to run away from home, and from father and mother, and try to take care of yourself among strange people who do not care for you. I have heard of children setting out to do that ; but before they had gone many steps alone they got frightened, and ran back in a great hurry, which was a much wiser thing than running away.

We do not hear that Cain ever tried to come back to God. It is said that he wandered far away, and that he built a city—the first city ; and he called the city after the name of his son. That son afterwards had children



and grandchildren, and some of the family were clever people, but I never heard whether any of them were good.

Truly Adam and Eve had bitter sorrow about these two sons of theirs : their good Abel taken away from them so soon ; and what was far worse, their eldest son, bad and hard-hearted, obliged to keep away from them because he was a murderer.

But when God gave them another son they were comforted and hopeful again. And Eve called him Seth ; for, she said, God has given me another child instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.

#### IV.

### HOW GOD SAVED NOAH.



**A**DAM and Eve lived a long time after Seth was born. They had other children, sons and daughters; but except Cain and Abel and Seth, we do not know the names of any of them.

These sons and daughters also lived long and had a great many children. Their children grew up and became the fathers and mothers of other people; so that before Adam died there were already a good many of his family on the earth.

I am afraid many of them were bad people, and as time went on they got worse, as you shall hear; but there was always some one in the world who loved God, and was honest and true and just.

There was a man called Enoch who walked with God,—that means he was a loving and obedient child to his Father in heaven. And Enoch did not die at last like all the other people, but while he was still alive, God took him away out of the world to be with himself.

The people in those days lived a great deal longer than any one does now. They seem to have been great, strong, clever people, as indeed they had need to be; for they had to get their bread from the wild land that never was tilled before, and to defend themselves from wild beasts; and all their tools and weapons they had to invent out of their own heads, besides making them with their own hands, and there were not so many to help as there are now.

But strong and clever as they were, I think they were sometimes weary, and this is why I think so.

There was a man called Lamech, who was born before Adam died. And when Lamech had a son of his own, he said, This son shall comfort us for all our work and for the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed. And he called his little son Noah, which means *comfort*.

You see they were glad when another person came into the world, because, when he should be grown up, he would help them in their work.

When Noah grew up, he was a just man and upright, and he walked with God.

It is nice to read this of him, because in his days—at least, by the time he was getting old—the other people in the world had grown very bad indeed.

I think those wonderful strong men who lived so many years first gave up thinking of God and remembering that they and the earth and everything in it belonged to him, and that they ought to obey him.

When they had forgotten God, and every one was determined to have his own way, they soon lost all kindness for each other. They ill-treated each other, putting each other to death without any pity; so that the whole earth was filled with violence, and men made the world ten times more miserable than it was when God first punished man for sin.

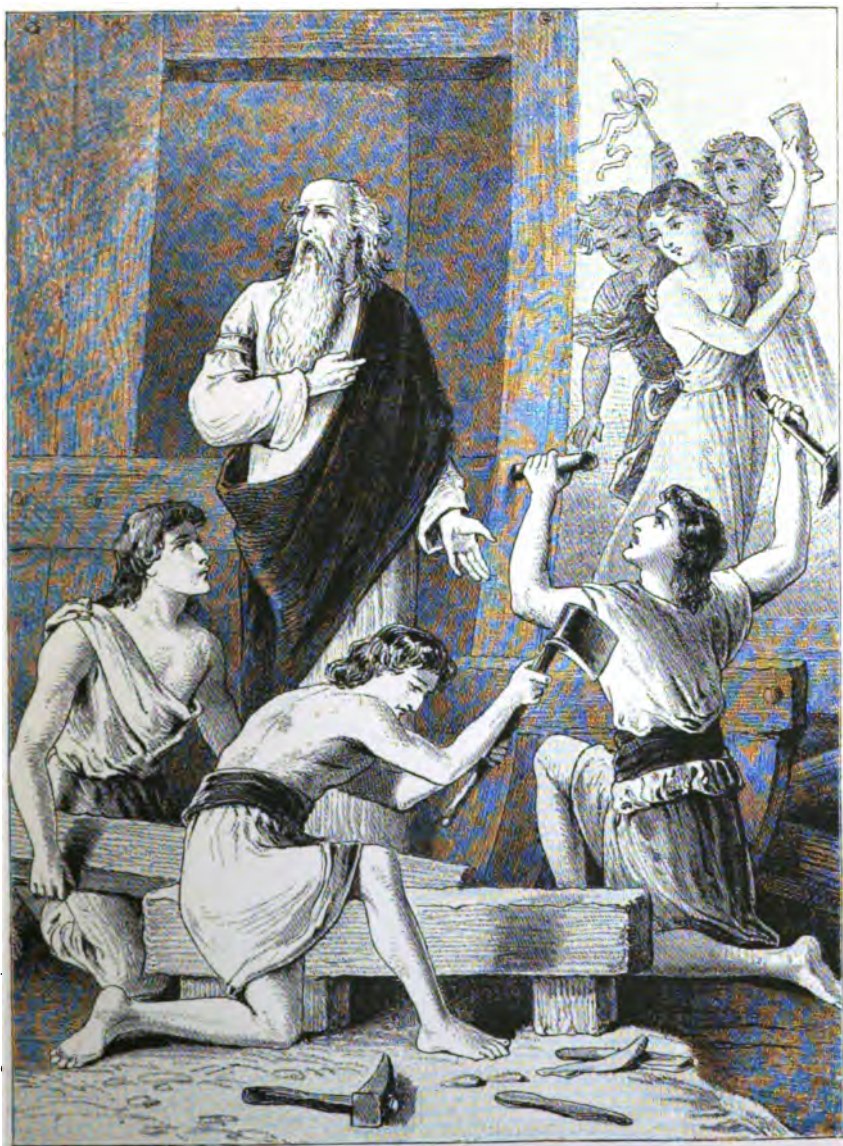
Then God saw that the wickedness of the people was great, and that all the thoughts and purposes and desires of their hearts were only bad all the time.

God knows very well when people have no wish ever to be better; and he knows what to do with such people too. He will not allow them to have their own way for ever. He will not allow the earth that he made beautiful and good to be made for ever miserable by wicked men.

Therefore God said, I will destroy all these people from the face of the earth.

But Noah had always pleased God; so God told him to make a kind of ship called an ark, very large and strong. He told him how to make it, and what size it must be.

And God said to Noah, I will bring a flood of waters on the earth to destroy every living thing, and everything that is in the earth shall die;



THE BUILDING OF THE ARK.



but you shall come into the ark, you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And two of every kind of bird, and of beast, and of insect you shall bring into the ark to keep them alive with you. And take some of every kind of food that is eaten, and it shall be food for you and for them.

Noah at once set about preparing the ark that should save him and his family. But the flood did not come soon. God gave the world a good many years still.

Noah's father died during those years, and I daresay a good many old people, who had not quite forgotten God, also died quietly before the terrible flood came to destroy them.

As for the rest of the people, if they heard what was coming (and I think they did), they would not believe it, but went on just as before. They made merry,\* and tried to be as happy as people can be without God, which is not very happy after all, my little friends.

At last the day came when God told Noah that it was time for him to come into the ark. So Noah brought seven of every clean animal and two of every other kind into the ark, as God had told him.

He had seven days to get them all in and to bring in food enough for them and for his own family.

And last of all Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, went into the ark; and the Lord shut them in.

Then the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened.

The sea rushed in upon the land, and great floods of rain came down from the sky, and the water rose over the land until it reached the ark, and the ark floated. And the water increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated about on the top of the water.

Still the water rose, till the tops of the hills were covered.

Higher and higher it rose, and then the mountains were covered, and every creature that moved upon the earth died, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man.

\* Luke xvii. 27.

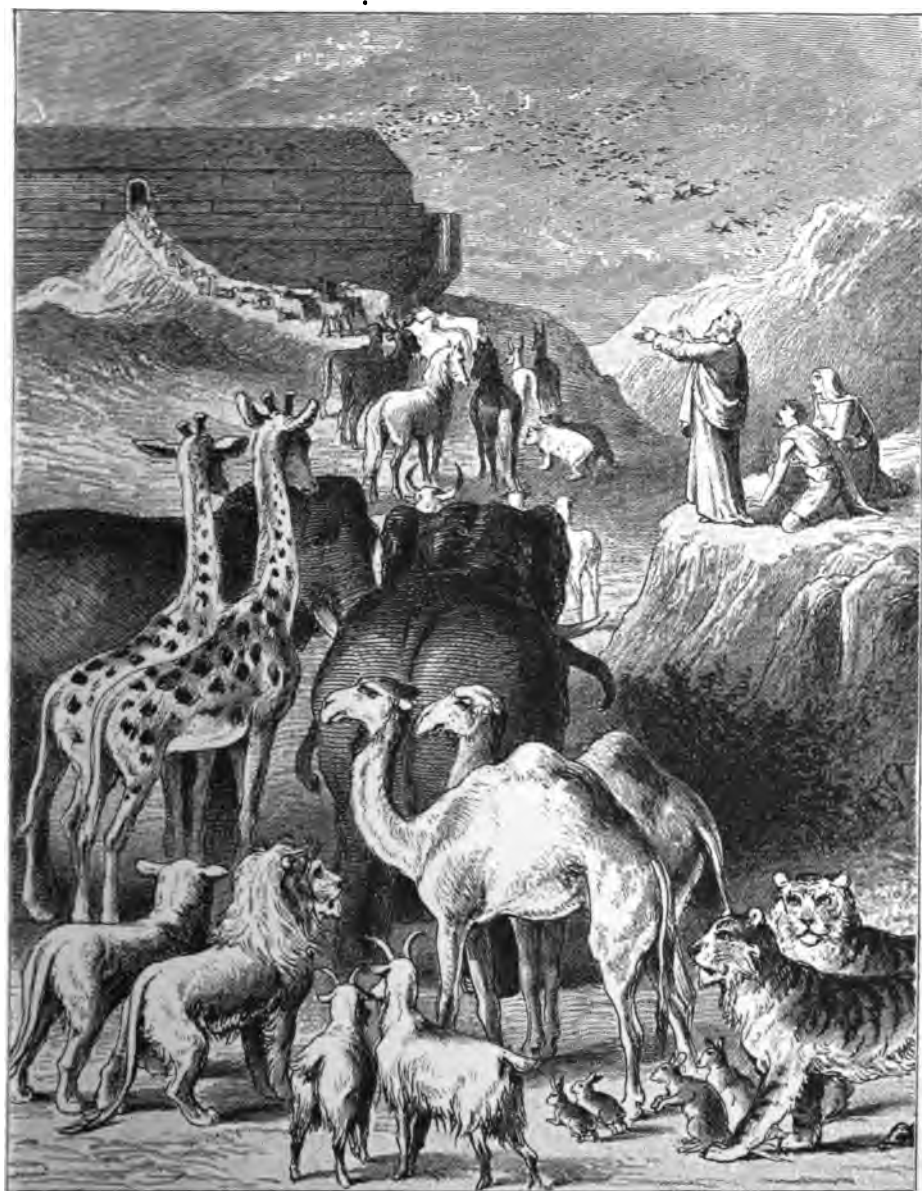


RETURN OF THE DOVE TO THE ARK.

Every living thing that was on the dry land died. Noah only remained, and they that were with him in the ark.

Then God remembered Noah and every living thing that was with him in the ark ; and he made a wind to pass over the earth.





THE ANIMALS ENTERING THE ARK.





The rain now ceased, and the fountains of the deep were stopped. Then the waters decreased slowly, until the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.

On the day that this happened Noah had been in the ark nearly half a year. Three months after, the tops of the mountains could be seen.

After forty days more Noah wanted to try how far the water had gone down. Opening the window of the ark, he sent out a raven—a large bird which lives in wild, rocky places. He also sent out a dove, which, you know, is a gentle, pretty bird that lives in the woods.



MOUNT ARARAT.

The raven did very well among the mountain-tops, and flew to and from the ark, for he did not need to stay in it any more. But the dove found no place to rest on, for there were no trees yet uncovered; so she soon came back again, and Noah kept her in the ark for another week.

When he sent her out again, she stayed until the evening, and came back with an olive leaf in her mouth. By this Noah knew that the water was very much gone back, for olive trees do not grow *very* high up on the hills.

After another week he once more sent out the dove, and she did not return. This was a good sign. Noah therefore removed the roof of the ark and looked out, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

V.

AFTER THE FLOOD.



HE day came when Noah and his family might safely leave the ark. They came out, and all the beasts and birds with them, and returned to the earth, which was quiet and peaceful enough now, for all the fierce, cruel men were dead.

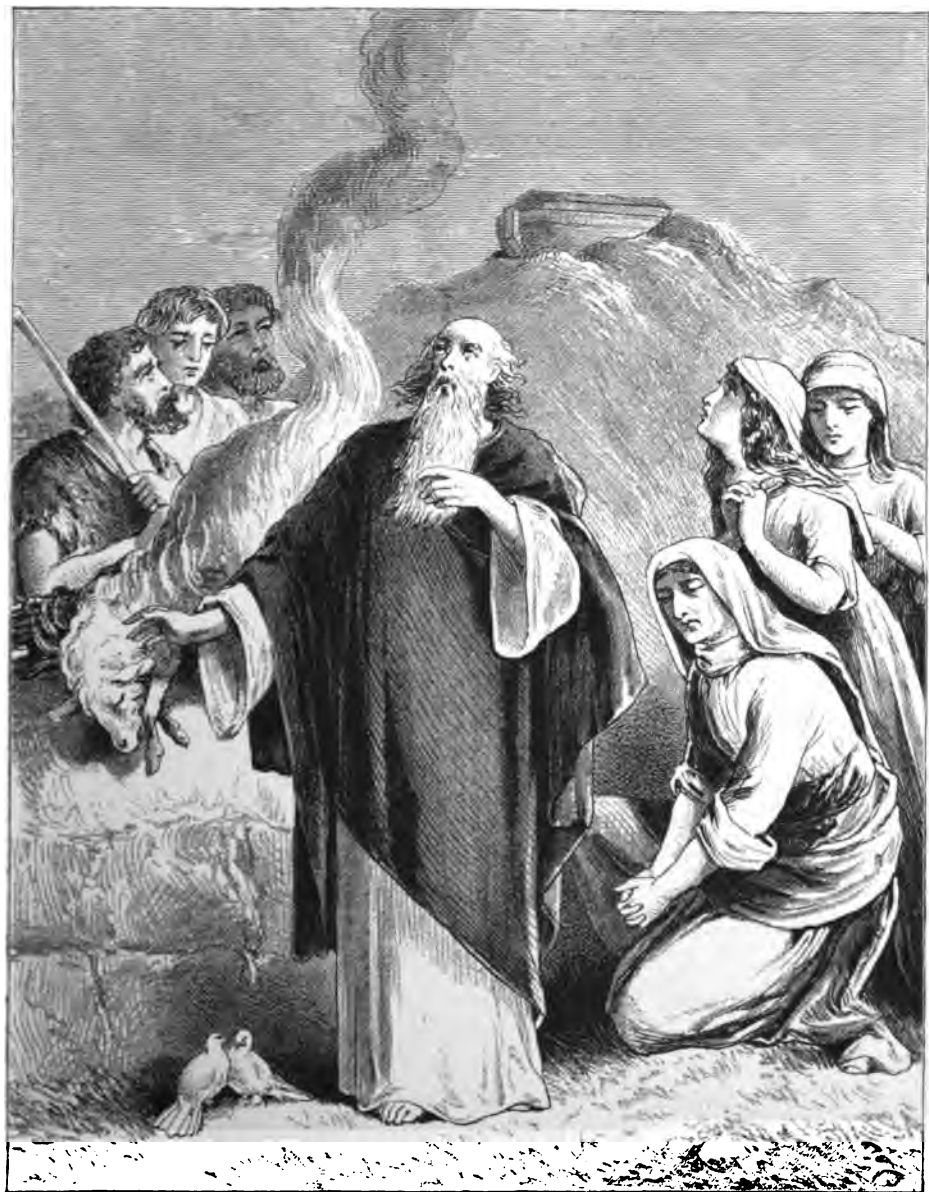
Once more there was only one family in the world ; and the head of that family believed in God and obeyed him.

Noah built an altar and offered burnt offerings, for that was the way in which people worshipped God in those days.

God accepted the offerings of his servant Noah. He said, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake ; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Then God blessed Noah and his family nearly in the same words as those in which he had blessed Adam and Eve. He told them that the earth should be filled again with their children, and to them was given everything in the earth. Only, as Noah and his sons had plenty of bad thoughts coming into their minds, and knew all about sin, God gave *them* laws, forbidding them to do those cruel and wicked things for which the other people had all been drowned in the flood.

He also told them that though all the beasts and birds and fishes were theirs, and whatever they chose they might kill for their food, yet people



NOAH'S SACRIFICE.



must not kill one another ; for man was made in the image of God, and was more precious than all the beasts. Whoever shed a man's blood must be put to death himself for his sin ; and if a beast killed a man, that beast must be killed too.

God gave them a promise that he would never again bring a flood on the earth to destroy all living things ; and the rainbow he gave for a sign that he would remember this promise.

He said, I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a promise between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud : and I will remember my promise, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

You have often seen this beautiful rainbow in the sky in showery weather, have you not ?

It was very merciful of our heavenly Father to give men this promise and this sign ; for after what had happened, they would have been terrified whenever they saw dark clouds and heavy rain, if they had not had God's sure promise that there would not be a flood again.

God *is* very merciful, my young friends. He gives us no needless pain or terror ; it is cruel people who do that. He punishes and destroys people who are determined to be wicked, but he has told us that he has no pleasure in destroying them. He wants them to turn from their wickedness and live.\*

Noah lived for a good while after the flood, and died an old man.

The names of his sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and the children of these three have since filled all the lands of the earth with people.

It is about Shem's family I shall mostly have to tell you in this book.

For a time these people kept together and helped one another. They were strong and clever ; and though few of them had such very long lives as those who lived before the flood, yet they lived longer than any one does now.

When a great many strong, clever people stay together and work

\* Ezek. xviii. 21-32.

together, they can do more work and make much more wonderful things than can be done by a few people in one place and a few in another. Therefore when people were multiplied on the earth again, they thought the best thing they could do was always to stay together and help one another.

When they had found a plain that they thought would be a good place for them to settle in, they resolved to build there a great city, and in it a huge strong tower, whose top, they said, should reach to the sky.

Such a tower would be seen on the plain for many miles round; and if any one wandered far, he could soon find his way back by this landmark. Perhaps that was the reason they wanted to build it; but I cannot be sure about that, for the Bible only says they did not want to be scattered.

But though people might have been stronger by keeping all together, there are many reasons why it would not have been the best thing for them to do.

God, who knows better than the wisest what is best for mankind, and who has never given up taking care of us, willed that they should be separated into different countries.

He said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

To scatter them abroad over the earth, he caused that different families should speak different languages; and as the people who understood each other's speech would keep together, and not have very much to do with the people whose speech they did not understand, it happened that each family became a separate people, living apart from the rest, wherever they could get on best.\*

Thus they left off building their city and their tower, which they meant should keep them all together.

The city was called Babel, and the tower was called the Tower of Babel, for there they found that God had confounded their language; and Babel means *confusion*.

Some of the families stayed quite near Babel, and others wandered

\* Gen. x. 5, 20, 31, 32.

further off and settled by the sea. Afterwards some of the children of these families wandered away over sea and land to find new homes, so that in our day there are people everywhere.

Now all this that I have told you is in the Bible for every one to read. And there is something more in the Bible too, not about what *has* happened to all those families of people, but about what is yet going to happen.

Some day the whole earth will be God's kingdom, and Jesus will reign over all these nations.\* That will be a peaceful, happy, prosperous time, my little friends. As we sometimes sing,—

“ Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run ;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

“ People and realms of every tongue  
Dwell on his love with sweetest song ;  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their early blessings on his name.

“ Blessings abound where'er he reigns :  
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains :  
The weary find eternal rest ;  
And all the sons of want are blest.

“ Let every creature rise and bring  
Peculiar honours to our King ;  
Angels descend with songs again,  
And earth repeat the loud Amen ! ”

\* Rev. xi. 15 ; Ps. lxxii.





# THE PATRIARCHS.

---

## I.

### THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL.



WHEN the men and women in the world were gathered into several nations, some of these nations were stronger and cleverer than others, and some were better than others.

Some remembered longer than others how God had made the world, and that he takes care of it, and that people ought to worship and obey him.

All of them, however, sooner or later got strange stories mixed up with their religion. Then they began to talk as if there were several gods, and even to make images of these gods, and to bow down before the images and worship them.

But God would not let all the world forget him and go their own way. He would have one family that should know him and worship him.

It is about this family I shall now have most to tell you.

There was a man called Abram, who first lived somewhere about that plain where the city of Babel stood. But the Lord God desired him to go out of that land, away from his relations and from his father's house, and to

come into a land that God would show him. God told him that he would there bless him greatly, and make his children a great nation, who should one day do good to all the people in the world.

Abram took Sarai his wife and his nephew Lot, and they set out, not knowing what place God would bring them to. They took with them their goods and their cattle and their servants, and came into the land of Canaan.

There God spoke again to Abram, and said to him, I will give all this land to your children.

In Canaan, Abram and Lot grew rich. Their cattle increased so much that after a while it was hard to find grass and water enough for them all. So Abram's servants began to fight with Lot's servants for the best fields to feed their cattle in.

Abram saw this would never do, so he said to Lot, We are near relations, therefore let there be no quarrelling between us or between our servants; rather let us live apart from each other, so as to have room enough for all our cattle. You shall choose the place you would like to go to, and then I will go somewhere else.

Lot chose a beautiful plain, in which there were two cities called Sodom and Gomorrah.

There were plenty of good grass in this plain, and many streams of water, and everything grew so richly that it all looked like a beautiful garden. But the men of Sodom were very wicked, so that after all it was not wise to make a home in this lovely spot; and Lot had reason afterwards to be very sorry for choosing it.

After Lot was gone away into Sodom, God spoke many times to Abram.

He desired him to travel through all the land, and to lift up his eyes and look around him in every direction; and he said, All the land that you can see shall belong to your children.

Again, he desired him to look up at the stars and try if he could count them; and he told him, Your family shall one day be like that—so many that they cannot be counted. And he changed his name to Abraham, which means, *the father of a great multitude*; and Sarai he called Sarah, which means a *princess*.

Now I must tell you that all this time Abraham had not a single bit of land in that country, not even one field, that was his own. It all belonged to people who were strangers to him; and although he and Sarah were now getting quite old, they had as yet no child.

But he never doubted God's word; he knew that when God promised him anything he was quite sure to get it at the right time. He trusted God just as children trust a good father; and that is quite the right way, my little friends; and God was pleased with it. It is said that Abraham believed God, and God counted it to him for righteousness.

Long afterwards, when people spoke of Abraham they called him "The Friend of God."

Why was this?

You know people who are friends delight to be together, and they tell their thoughts to one another. Abraham used to tell all that was in his mind to God. When he was in trouble, he used to tell God about it, and God comforted him;\* and when people he loved were in trouble, he told that, and God helped them too.†

Sometimes God told Abraham what he was going to do. Once when God was talking with Abraham, he told him that because the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was very great, he was now sending his messengers to those places to see if there was any goodness at all left there.

When Abraham heard this, and knew that God was about to punish the people who lived in that beautiful plain, he said, Wilt thou also destroy the good people with the wicked? If there are fifty good people in Sodom wilt thou not spare it for the sake of the fifty good people that are in it? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

God said, If I find in Sodom fifty good men, then I will spare the place for their sakes.

Then Abraham said, But if there are five less than the fifty, wilt thou destroy all the city for the want of five?

God said, If I find there forty-five good men, I will not destroy it.

Abraham said again, Perhaps there shall be forty found there.

\* Gen. xv. 2-5.

† Gen. xviii. 18, 19-xxi. 11, 12.

And God said, I will not destroy it for forty's sake.

At last Abraham said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Perhaps ten good men shall be found there.

And God said, I will spare it for the sake of ten.

Then Abraham was satisfied; he left off praying for Sodom, and returned to his home.

The angels that God had sent to see Sodom came into it in the evening. They met Lot in the gate of the city.

Lot thought they were two men who were on a journey. He therefore asked them to stay in his house that night, and he prepared supper for them, and treated them kindly.

The angels found that all the other men of the city cared for nothing but wickedness; and they said to Lot, Have you sons or daughters in the city besides those in this house? If you have, bring them out of the place, for the wickedness of it is become great before the Lord; and he has sent us to destroy it.

Lot went out and said to the men who had married his daughters, Up! get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy it. But they would not believe him.

When the morning dawned, the angels hastened Lot, and said, Arise, take your wife and your two daughters that are here, and get away, lest you be destroyed in the punishment of the city.

Strange to say, he still delayed; but the angels caught them by the hand, and brought them out of the city, and said, Escape for your life; do not look behind you, nor stop anywhere in the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed.

Lot feared to go to the mountain, and he said, There is a little city in this plain; let me stay there. It is but a little one; will not God spare it?

And the angel said, I will not overthrow this city, for which you have spoken. Hasten! escape to it; for I cannot do anything till you are come into it.

The name of the little city was Zoar.

As soon as Lot came into it, the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah

brimstone and fire out of heaven, and overthrew those cities, and all the inhabitants of the plain, and everything that grew upon the ground.

But Lot's wife turned and looked back upon the burning cities, and she became a pillar of salt.



LOT FLEEING FROM SODOM.

Lot and his daughters went and lived in a cave in the mountain; for he was afraid, after all, to stay in Zoar.

The fruitful green plain, for the sake of which Lot had made his home among the wicked people, was thus turned into a waste, desolate place; and I think all his riches and his cattle must have been destroyed. But Lot

himself and his two daughters were saved, for Abraham's sake, and because, though Lot had been foolish enough to go and live among the wicked people, yet he never liked their bad deeds.\*

Abraham went up early in the morning to the place where he had been speaking with God, and looked towards the plain, and he saw the smoke of the burning cities going up like the smoke of a furnace.

\* 2 Peter ii. 7, 8.

## II.

### THE SON OF PROMISE.



MUST remind you again of three promises that God made to Abraham; for though there were other promises too, yet these three were the principal ones, and they were very often repeated:—

That Abraham should be the father of a great many people.

That the land of Canaan should be given to his family.

That some one of his family should do good to all the people in the world.

Now, what was the meaning of this last promise?

Do you remember how Adam and Eve had been told that some day a Person should be born who would overcome Satan?

Well, I think the good people in the world had always kept this hope in their minds; and when God said to Abraham, In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed, I am nearly sure that Abraham knew then that the promised Person should be one of his family.

But, as I told you, for a long, long time after he had got this promise Abraham and Sarah had no child at all.

At last the day came when they saw the face of their own little son, and they called him Isaac, which means *laughter*; for they were ready to laugh for very joy.

God talked with Abraham many times after Isaac was born, as he had done before; and he made his life very peaceful and prosperous.

I think when Abraham first left his old home he knew only a little about God; but he obeyed him, and then in that strange land God taught him



more and more, for everything we read about Abraham shows us that the longer he lived the better he knew and loved God. And the more he knew and loved him, so much the more he knew what it was right to do; and when he knew it he did it.

Once, however, God tried whether Abraham would obey him in something that it was very hard to do.

You remember I told you that in those old times when people worshipped God they used to offer burnt offerings,—that is, they used to kill an animal, as we kill animals for food, only, instead of eating the meat, they used to burn it upon an altar for a burnt offering.

Well, when Isaac was a well-grown lad, God said to Abraham, Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell you of.

Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his servants with him, and Isaac his son. He also took wood to make a fire for the burnt offering. And he went to the place of which God had told him.

They were three days on the way, and on the third day, when Abraham saw the place afar off, he said to his servants, Stay here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come back again to you.

Then Abraham gave the wood to Isaac to carry, and he himself took some fire and a knife, and they walked on together.

As they walked, Isaac said, Father, see here are the wood and the fire; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

And Abraham answered, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

At length they came to the place that God had told Abraham of. There he built an altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son and laid him upon the altar on the wood. And Abraham took up the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, and said, Abraham! Abraham!

Abraham answered, Here I am.

Then the voice said, Do not touch the lad, nor do anything to him: for now I know that you fear God, because you have not kept back your son, your only son, from me.



ABRAHAM OFFERING UP ISAAC.

Abraham now lifted up his eyes and looked, and he saw behind him a ram caught by its horns in some bushes. He took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

Abraham called that place by a name which means *The Lord will pro-*

*vide*; for there God had provided a ram for a burnt offering instead of Isaac.

Then God spoke to Abraham again, and blessed him, because he had been willing to give up his only son. And the Lord repeated those promises that I told you of.

Abraham and Isaac then went back to where they had left the servants, and they all returned home together.

By the time that Isaac was a full-grown man, Abraham and Sarah had got very old. Sarah died first, and Abraham mourned for her; and he bought a piece of ground in which to bury her.

You know Abraham had not a single field of his own in that country, although the whole land was some day to belong to his family; so he bought from the people of the land a field in which there was a cave, and there he buried Sarah.

And he mourned and wept for her; and Isaac too was sad for his mother.

After that, Abraham, who was now quite old, began to wish that Isaac should have a wife. But he did not think that any of the young women who belonged to the land of Canaan would make a good wife for him.

Though the people of Canaan had a great respect for Abraham, and treated him very well, yet they were not good people on the whole. Afterwards they became very bad indeed; and I think, even at the time Abraham was living among them, they did not fear God nor care much about doing what was right. At all events, Abraham would not have his son married to any of them.

He therefore called his eldest servant, a man to whom he had given the care of all his goods and of all his servants; and he said to him, You must go to my old home, and bring back from it the daughter of one of my relations to be Isaac's wife.

Long before this time, God had said of Abraham, I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice.

Now we find that not only was Isaac a good man, one who loved to do



REBEKAH AND ABRAHAM'S SERVANT.





right, but that this eldest servant had also learned to pray to God and to trust in him; and he served his master faithfully, like a pious man as he was. He took some men and ten camels with him, and set out on his journey, which must have taken several days.

At last one evening they came to the place where Abraham had lived when he was young. There they stopped near a well, and the camels knelt down to rest themselves as camels do when they are tired.

They halted just as the women of the place were coming down to the well to draw water, as they always did in the cool of the evening.

Abraham's servant did not know any of them, nor could he tell which of them would be a nice wife for Isaac. So he did what he knew his master would have done in the same case,—he prayed to God to direct him.

He said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Then he said, When I ask one of these women for a drink of water, let the one who is to be Isaac's wife say to me, Drink, and I will give the camels drink also. Then shall I know that she is to be Isaac's wife.

Before he was done speaking there came a beautiful young girl with a pitcher on her shoulder. She went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

Then the man ran to her, and said, Pray let me drink a little water from your pitcher.

And Rebekah, for that was her name, answered, Drink, my lord. Immediately she slipped the pitcher from her shoulder, and raised it upon her hand to let him drink.

When he had done drinking, she said, I will draw water for your camels too till they have done drinking.

Rebekah emptied her pitcher into the water-trough that was by the well, and then ran again to the well, and drew water for all the camels.

It was quite hard work, for camels after a long journey will drink a great deal of water. But this kind-hearted girl took pleasure in giving drink to the tired, thirsty animals as well as in showing kindness to strange travellers.

Abraham's servant watched her silently, wondering if this sweet and beautiful girl was really to be Isaac's wife.

When all the camels were done drinking, he took out a precious golden ornament, such as women wore on their foreheads, and two thick bracelets of gold, and gave them to the girl, and said to her, Tell me, I pray you, whose daughter are you? And is there room in your father's house for us to stay there?

Rebekah said, I am the daughter of Bethuel, who is the son of Nahor. We have both straw and food enough for the camels, and room for you to stay in.

Then the man bowed down his head and thanked God for bringing him to the house of his master's relations, for he knew now that this girl was the grand-daughter of Abraham's brother.

When Rebekah ran home and told what had happened, and showed the costly golden bracelets that had been given to her, her brother Laban hastened out to bring the travellers into his father's house. So he brought them in, and unloaded the camels and gave them food. He also gave the men water to wash their feet, and prepared food for them.

But Abraham's servant said, I will not eat till I have told my business. He told them who he was, and why he had come to his master's old home; how he had prayed to God by the well; and how, before he had done speaking, Rebekah did just what he had asked that Isaac's wife might do. And now, he said, if you will let her come with me, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may know what to do.

Laban and his father said, God has done this; we may not hinder. Let Rebekah be the wife of your master's son, as God has directed it.

Abraham's servant again bowed down and thanked God. He gave Rebekah gifts of silver and gold and beautiful dresses that he had brought with him. He also gave gifts to her mother and her brother. And they all ate and drank and rested that night in the house of Rebekah's father.

In the morning Abraham's servant said, Let me now go home to my master.

Then they asked Rebekah, Will you go with this man? And she said, I will go.

Bidding her farewell, and praying that God would bless her, they put her and her maids upon camels, and sent them away under the care of Abraham's servant.

This journey, too, lasted many days.

When they got near the end of it, it was evening, and Isaac was walking alone in the field, thinking—perhaps he was praying.

Rebekah saw him a good way off, and when they told her that he was Isaac, she got down off her camel, and the servant went on and told Isaac all that had happened.

Isaac then went forth to meet the bride that God had sent him. He brought her into the tent that had been his mother's, and she became his wife. And he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Some time after this Abraham died in a good old age; and was buried in that cave that he had bought from the people of the land.



### III.

## THE STORY OF A BIRTHRIGHT.



ISAAC was now the owner of all the flocks and master of all the servants that had been his father's.

He also possessed something else which had come down to him from his father, and which both Abraham and he thought more precious than all their riches. This was the blessing and the promises which God had given to Abraham. These promises were repeated to Isaac.

He was now the head of the family, so he knew that his children should become a great people, and that they should one day possess the land of Canaan; also that the promised Person, who would save and bless mankind, should be one of his family.

Isaac worshipped God with all his heart, and sought to do right, as Abraham had done.

Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, whose names were Esau and Jacob.

Esau was the elder; but God had told Isaac that the younger brother should be greater than the elder—that is to say, that Jacob, and not Esau, should be the one to whom the blessings and the promises must come. He was therefore called Jacob, which means a *supplanter*,—that is, one who puts another person out of his place and gets into it himself.

These boys were from the first very different from each other in their habits, as they were quite unlike each other in their faces. I do not think they could have played much together when they were boys; I am sure they did not care for the same plays.

When they were grown up Esau was fond of field sports. He liked to hunt wild animals far off through the open country. He was a strong man, and his skin was rough and hairy.

Jacob was smooth-skinned, and he had quieter tastes. He stayed near his home, and took care of cattle.

Jacob was his mother's favourite, but Esau was Isaac's favourite. He used to kill and bring home the kind of meat that Isaac liked best. This pleased Isaac. It showed that his son was thoughtful for him.

As Esau was the elder son, he had what was called the birthright—that is, he was honoured and made much of as the person who, after Isaac died, should be the head of the family, and who should have much the larger share of all that had belonged to his father.

It was to the elder son servants would come for orders if their master was not at hand. Next to his father, they were bound to obey him; and he had some authority even over his brother.

Now, if Jacob knew—and I think he did—that God had said of him and his brother, The elder shall serve the younger, he must have known that one day or other all those rights and privileges should belong to him.

If he had been like Abraham, he would have waited patiently till God gave them to him. But he was not satisfied to wait. He plotted and planned to get his brother's place, and I do not think you will like the way he did it.

One day Esau returned from his hunting weary and very hungry. He found Jacob cooking pottage of lentils,—very tempting no doubt to a hungry man; and Esau was faint with hunger. He said to his brother, Feed me, I pray you, with some of that pottage.

Jacob said, Sell me your birthright for some of the pottage.

I am dying of hunger, said Esau; what good is my birthright to me?

When he had solemnly promised to give it up, Jacob gave him bread and pottage; and Esau ate and drank, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

He was sorry for it afterwards, when it was too late; but you see he was not in the habit of caring much for anything except getting what he

wanted just at the moment. I am afraid he thought very little about those promises that were so precious to Abraham and to Isaac. He was not a religious man.

A good while after this Isaac began to grow old. He was feeble, and could not see well. He thought he should soon die, and he wished, before he died, to give a special blessing to his elder son.

He desired Esau to bring in some venison, and make with it a dish of savoury meat. He said that when he had eaten it he would then bless his favourite son before he died.

Esau therefore took his arrows and his bow and went out to hunt for venison.

Rebekah, however, had resolved to get the chief blessing for Jacob.

She desired him to bring her two good kids from the flock, that she might make with them savoury meat, such as Isaac loved. Jacob should then bring it to his father, and receive the blessing that was meant for Esau; for Isaac's eyes were so dim that he could not see which son it was.

But, said Jacob, my brother is hairy, and I am smooth; perhaps my father will feel me, and find that I am deceiving him, and I shall bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.

Rebekah answered, Upon me be the curse, my son; only do as I tell you.

Jacob therefore fetched the kids, and Rebekah made savoury meat. She took some of Esau's clothes and put them on Jacob; and she covered his smooth hands and his neck with the skins of the kids, and gave him the savoury meat to bring in to his father.

When Jacob came in, Isaac said to him, Who are you?

I am Esau, your first-born, said Jacob. I have done as you wished. Will you now eat of my venison, and bless me?

How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son? asked Isaac.

Because, said Jacob, the Lord your God brought it before me.

Then Isaac desired Jacob to come near that he might feel him.

When he had felt his hands, which were covered with the kid-skins, he said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau; and he asked him again, Are you *truly* my son Esau?

I am, said Jacob.

When Isaac had eaten, he said, Come near now and kiss me, my son.

Jacob came near and kissed him. And Isaac blessed Jacob, and prayed that God would give him riches and prosperity, that he should be lord over all his relations, and that his brother's family should obey him.

All the time Isaac thought that it was to Esau he was giving this blessing.

Almost as soon as Jacob had left his father, Esau came in with savoury meat, made of venison which he had taken in hunting.

He said, Let my father rise and eat of his son's venison, and bless me.

Who are you? said Isaac.

Esau answered, I am your first-born son, Esau.

Then Isaac remembered how God had long ago said that Jacob should be greater than Esau. He knew that nothing he could do would alter that. Trembling greatly, he said, Who? where is he that brought me venison, and I have blessed him? yes, and he *shall* be blessed. Your brother came deceitfully and took away your blessing.

When Esau heard this he uttered a bitter cry, and said, Is he not rightly called Jacob? He has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now he has taken away my blessing! Have you no blessing left for me, my father?

Isaac answered, I have made him your master. I have given him riches and prosperity. What can I do now for you, my son?

And Esau said, Have you but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau wept bitterly.

Isaac then blessed Esau, but not as he had blessed Jacob. He promised him that he too should enjoy riches; but that his family should serve that of his brother, though not always.

After this Esau hated Jacob, and he resolved in his anger that when their father was dead he would kill him.

When Rebekah knew this, she told Jacob that he must leave his home until his brother's anger should be over. She begged Isaac to send Jacob away to her brother Laban's house, that he might get a wife there; for

Esau had married two of the women of Canaan, and they were a grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

Therefore Isaac sent his younger son away to Rebekah's old home ; but before he went he blessed him again, and this time he prayed that God would give the blessing of Abraham to Jacob and to his children.

Jacob set out, alone and on foot, upon his long weary journey. He had got the birthright and the blessing, but he had chosen to take his own way of getting them, and his crooked ways brought him into many troubles ; and I do not think Rebekah ever saw her favourite son again.

#### IV.

### JACOB'S JOURNEY.



AS Jacob was on his journey, running away from his angry brother, he came one evening to a place where he resolved to stay for the night. He took some stones for his pillows, and lay down to sleep.

Now Jacob must have often heard of God. Yet I do not think the thought of God comforted him that night when he lay down in that lonely place.\*

He knew that the Lord was Isaac's God and Abraham's God, but I do not think he knew him yet for himself. I do not think he knew that his Father in heaven could see him and take care of him when he was far away from Isaac and Rebekah. I believe he did not think of God at all.

But God thought of Jacob; and that very night he taught him something about himself that Jacob never afterwards forgot.

When he was asleep, with his head upon a stone, Jacob had a dream. In his dream he saw a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven, and the angels of God were coming down to the earth and going up again to heaven upon this ladder. And above it the Lord stood, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land upon which you are lying I will give to you and to your children. And your children shall be like the dust of the earth, and shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your children shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And I am with you,

\* "I knew it not" (Gen. xxviii. 16).



JACOB'S DREAM.

and will keep you where you are going, and bring you again into this land ; for I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.

When Jacob awaked out of his sleep, he said, Surely God is in this place,

and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! this is none other than the house of God ; this is the gate of heaven.

Why was Jacob afraid when he found that God had been near him all the time ? Why did he tremble when God had just spoken such kind and gracious words to him ?

My little friends, I think that Jacob was afraid of God's presence because he had been behaving badly. He had not loved and trusted God, and so, instead of being truthful and dutiful, and waiting until God should give him good things, he had been trying to get them for himself in his own way.

This made him do unkind acts and tell wicked lies. Then when he remembered that God's eye was on him all the time, and that the very thoughts of his heart were known to God, he did not at first feel happy.

But he did the very best thing that people can do when they find they have been going all wrong,—he repented—that is, he changed his way. He said that if God would be with him and take care of him, then the Lord, who was Isaac's God, should be his God too, and he would obey him and serve him.

Jacob took the stones on which he had been lying, and built a pillar to mark the place where God had spoken to him, and where he had resolved to be God's obedient child. He called the place Beth-el, which means *the house of God*.

After a long, long journey on foot, Jacob came to the country where his mother had lived when she was young. There at mid-day he came to a well around which some shepherds had brought their flocks to give them water.

There was a great stone over the mouth of the well to prevent the water from being dried up by the sun, and the shepherds were waiting till all the flocks were gathered there, to roll away the stone.

Jacob spoke to these men, and when he found that they lived near his mother's old home, he asked them if they knew Laban, and if he was well and prosperous.

They replied, We know him ; he is well. And there is his daughter Rachel coming with the sheep.



While they were speaking, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, which were under her care; and Jacob rolled the great stone from the mouth of the well, and drew water for the sheep of Laban his mother's brother.

Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and told her that he was her cousin, and that he was Rebekah's son. And Jacob wept; for joy, I suppose, at meeting once more, after his long, long journey, some one who was related to him.

Rachel ran home and told her father. He came out at once to meet his sister's son; and he kissed him and brought him to his house, and heard all about Jacob's journey.

Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him; and after a while Laban said to him, Although you are my nephew, you shall not serve me for nothing. What shall I give you for your work?

Jacob answered, I will serve you for seven years if you will then give me Rachel, your younger daughter, to be my wife.

So Laban promised. And the seven years seemed to Jacob only like a few days, because he loved Rachel so dearly.

At the end of that time, however, Laban deceived Jacob, and made him take Leah, Rachel's elder sister, to be his wife, instead of Rachel, whom he loved so much. He would not give Rachel until Jacob had promised to serve another seven years.

Then Jacob served seven years more for Rachel. After that he stayed a good many years longer, working faithfully, and bearing a great deal of hardship and unfair treatment.

In spite of this unfair treatment Jacob grew rich; and at last the time came when the Lord desired him to return to the land of Canaan. He got together all his cattle and his goods, and he put his wives and his children on camels, and they set out on their journey.

After travelling for several days they drew near to the land of Canaan.

Jacob now began to fear to meet his brother Esau. He remembered how Esau had once threatened to kill him, and he knew not whether he had yet forgiven him.

When he was told that Esau with four hundred men was coming to meet him, he was greatly afraid and distressed. He thought that Esau would try to kill not only the brother who had offended him, but also his wives and his children.

He therefore divided his flocks, his camels, and his servants into two bands, so that if Esau should take one band of them, the other should escape. Then he prayed to God very earnestly to take care of him and his family.

He said, O Lord God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, who desiredst me to return to this country, and didst promise to take care of me: I do not deserve the least of all the mercies and all the truth that thou hast showed to thy servant; for I left my country with nothing but my staff in my hand, and now I have become two bands. Save me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother; for I fear him, lest he come and kill me, and the mothers with the children.

After he had prayed, he took a great number of his sheep and goats and camels, and sent them on with some of his servants for a present to Esau. When he had done all he could think of for the safety of his wives and his children, he stayed for a little while alone.

There in the night God spoke to him and blessed him, and changed his name to Israel; so that after this time he is often called Israel instead of Jacob.

The next day he saw in the distance Esau coming towards him with his four hundred men.

Jacob went on first to meet his brother, and when he came near he bowed himself down before him. But Esau ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and then they both wept.

It was many years since they had last met, and Esau had now forgiven Jacob everything.

Esau asked Jacob, Who are these with you?

Jacob answered, The children that God has graciously given me.

Then the mothers and the children came near and saluted Esau.

Afterwards Jacob asked his brother to receive the present he had sent him.

But Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that which you have for yourself.

However, when Jacob pressed him he took it.

When they had talked together in a kind and brotherly manner for some time, Esau returned to his own home.

Jacob then went on; and when he had come into the land of Canaan he spread his tent and built an altar to worship God.

After some time, Jacob went on to see his father, who was now very old indeed. I think Rebekah must have been dead, for it says nothing about her.

When at last Isaac died, Esau and Jacob buried him in the place where Abraham and Sarah were buried. And they mourned for their father together, as brothers should.

## JOSEPH'S TROUBLES.



JACOB had twelve sons. The two youngest of them were Rachel's children ; their names were Joseph and Benjamin.

Benjamin was a great deal younger than any of his brothers ; and when he was born his mother died.

Jacob was deeply grieved at her death. He had never loved any one so much as he loved Rachel ; and for her sake Joseph and Benjamin were dearer to him than all his other children.

Benjamin was still but a very little child when Joseph was a full-grown boy, able to help to take care of his father's sheep.

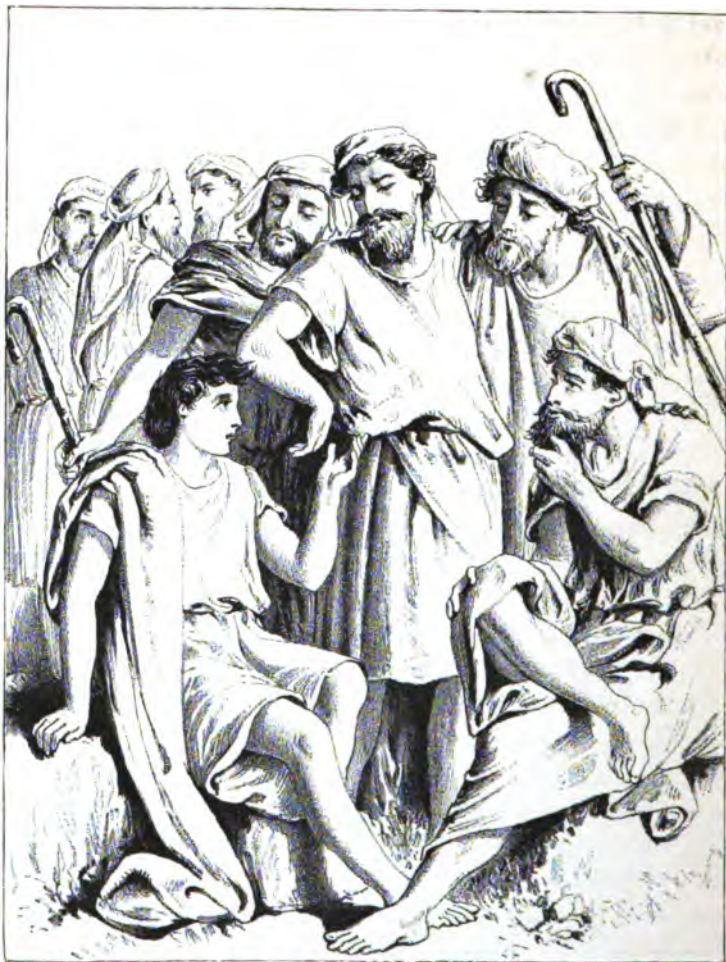
Jacob made more of Joseph than he did of any of his other sons. No doubt this was partly because he was Rachel's child ; but I think also that he was the most dutiful son Jacob had. We hear of many bad things that the others did, but Joseph seems to have behaved well from the first.

Once when Joseph was keeping the sheep with some of his brothers, he told his father of their bad ways, and this made them angry with him.

I daresay some of my little friends will say, "We don't like a tell-tale." And, I confess, neither do I. I think a person, young or old, who takes pleasure in getting his companions into trouble or disgrace must have a bad, unkind heart.

A young person, however, may sometimes see things done which parents and teachers ought to know of, so that they may put a stop to them ; and I feel sure that what Joseph told his father was something of this kind.

What made Joseph's brothers still more angry with him was seeing their father make so much of him. Jacob gave him a coat of many colours. This



JOSEPH TELLING HIS DREAM.

was really dressing Joseph as if he were a greater person than the rest of the family ; and his brothers did not like that, so they hated him, and were rude to him.

Joseph had a dream which made his brothers more angry than ever when he told it to them.

He said, I dreamt that we were all binding sheaves of corn in the field, and my sheaf stood upright, and your sheaves stood round and bowed themselves down before my sheaf.

His brothers said, Does that mean that we are to bow down to you? Do you think that you indeed shall reign over us, or that you shall be greater than we?

Afterwards he had another dream, and he said to his father and to his brothers, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me.

And his father said, What do you mean by telling us this dream? Shall I, indeed, and your mother and your brothers, come and bow down before you?

Though Jacob rebuked him thus, yet he remembered about Joseph's dream, and I believe he thought it might mean something.

His brothers, however, still envied him and hated him.

One time after this Jacob's elder sons went a good way off from their home to find grass for their sheep.

After they had been gone some days, Jacob sent Joseph to see them, and to bring him word how they were and how the flocks were getting on.

Joseph was some time finding his brothers, for they had to move about in order to get grass for their flocks; but at last he found them.

When they saw him in the distance they said one to another, Here is this dreamer coming. Now let us kill him, and throw him into some pit in the wilderness; and we will say that a wild beast has eaten him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

Reuben, the eldest brother, however, would not let them do this. He said, Do not kill him; but let us put him into this pit here in the wilderness. Reuben thought he could take him out of the pit again when his brothers were gone away.

So when Joseph came up they laid hold of him, stripped off his fine coat of many colours, and threw him into the pit.

This pit had most likely been dug by shepherds for a well, but it was now quite dry.



JOSEPH CAST INTO THE PIT.

After they had put Joseph into the pit, the brothers sat down to eat, thinking, I daresay, that they had got well rid of their young brother, who, they had feared, might some day become a greater man than any of them.

While they were eating they saw coming along a company of travellers,

riding upon camels. They were merchants who were carrying goods from a distant land into the land of Egypt, to sell them there.

Then Judah, one of the brothers, said, What good shall it do us to kill our brother and to hide his blood? Let us sell him to these merchants, and let us not kill him, for he is our brother.

All the others present agreed to this. They went and drew the poor boy Joseph up out of the pit, and sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver.

The merchants carried Joseph off with them into Egypt to sell him there for a slave.

Reuben was not with the rest when the merchants came by, and he did not know what they had done.

After a while he went again to the pit, in order to take Joseph out of it and send him back to his father. When he found the pit empty, he came to his brothers in great trouble and distress, saying, The boy is gone! and I—what shall I do?

He feared, no doubt, to meet his father, who would be very angry with the eldest brother for not having taken better care of the boy Joseph.

Then the brothers took Joseph's coat, dipped it in the blood of a kid which they had killed, and brought it to their father, saying, Look at this coat which we have found. Is it your son's coat?

Jacob at once knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast has eaten him; Joseph is surely torn in pieces.

The aged father wept in bitter sorrow for the son whom he believed to be dead. And when his children tried to comfort him, he said, I will mourn all my life long; I will go down to the grave to my son mourning.

The merchants brought Joseph into the land of Egypt. There they sold him to a rich man called Potiphar, to be his slave.

A slave is a servant who is obliged to stay with his master always. People used to consider that their slaves belonged to them as much as their horses did. They used to buy and sell them, and some cruel people treated them very badly.

It was very sad, indeed, for Joseph to be carried so far away from his





JOSEPH'S COAT BROUGHT TO JACOB.

father, who loved him so dearly, and to be made the slave of a strange man.

Young as he was, however, Joseph already loved God and obeyed him. He was therefore not without a friend in the land of Egypt, for God was with him.

Because Joseph obeyed God, he was also a good and faithful servant to his master Potiphar.

God caused everything that Joseph did to prosper, so that after a while his master gave him the care of everything. He never troubled himself to look after his goods; for he found that Joseph was just as careful and well-behaved when he was left to himself as when his master's eye was on him.

But Potiphar's wife was a wicked woman. She grew to hate Joseph because he was good; and she told stories of him that made his master so angry with him that he put him in prison.

This was a new trouble for poor Joseph, and no doubt a very sore one; but you shall hear how God was with him and took care of him in the prison too.

## VI.

### JOSEPH'S GREATNESS.



JOSEPH lived in prison many years; but God caused the keeper of it to be kind to him. This man soon found out that Joseph was both good and wise, so he set him over everything that was done in the prison, and gave the other prisoners into his care.

Thus a good many years passed away, until one day two men were put into prison who had offended Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. One was the king's chief butler and the other his chief baker. And the keeper of the prison gave them in charge to Joseph.

One morning Joseph found them more sad and dismal than usual, and he asked them why it was.

They told him they had each had a strange dream, and they wanted some one to tell them the meaning of what they had dreamt.

Now dreams had a great deal to do with Joseph's life. Joseph was what is called a prophet; he was one of those persons to whom God sometimes showed what was going to happen, in order that he might warn people and tell them what it was best for them to do.

Several times it was by dreams that God taught Joseph. You remember those dreams of his own that made his brothers so angry? And God afterwards taught him things by dreams that other people had.

When these two men told Joseph that their dreams troubled them, and that they longed for some one to interpret them, he said, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you. This was as much as to say, God knows what is the meaning of your dreams; if he chooses, he will

teach it to me, and show me what is going to happen : therefore tell me the dreams.

Then the chief butler told his dream.

And Joseph said, This is the meaning of your dream :—After three days you shall return to your place in the king's house, and you shall wait upon the king as you did before. When this shall happen to you, I beg that you will show kindness to me, and ask the king to take me out of this place ; for I was stolen away out of my own country, and since I came to this land I have done nothing for which I deserve to be put into this prison.

When the chief baker saw what a good meaning the other man's dream had, he told his dream.

But Joseph said, This is the meaning of your dream :—After three days the king shall cause you to be hanged.

It all happened as Joseph had said. Three days after that, King Pharaoh forgave the chief butler, and sent for him to be his butler again ; but he hanged the chief baker, who, I daresay, had done something to deserve it.

When the chief butler was brought back again to his place he forgot Joseph ; and for two years he never said a word about him to the king.

At the end of two years, however, Pharaoh himself had dreams which troubled him, and in the morning he sent for all the wise men in Egypt ; but they knew not the meaning of the dreams.

Then the chief butler said, Now I remember that I have done wrong. When the king sent me and the chief baker to prison, we had each of us a dream one night ; and there was in the prison a young man, a stranger, who told us the meaning of our dreams. And it happened to us just as he said it would ; for he told us that I should be the king's butler again, and that the chief baker should be hanged.

Pharaoh therefore sent for Joseph, and he was brought at last out of the dreary prison.

He was very young when he was put in prison ; now he was a full-grown man of thirty years.

He changed his clothes, and came out once more into the fresh air and the sunshine, and stood before Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said to him, I am told that you can understand a dream and tell the meaning of it.

Joseph replied, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

In my dream, said Pharaoh, I stood upon the bank of the river; and there came up from the river seven fat, good cows, and they fed in a meadow. Then seven very lean, bad cows, such as I never saw in the land of Egypt—they were so bad—came up after them. These ate up the seven fat cows; and after they had eaten them, they were just as lean and hungry-looking as ever. Then I awoke. And when I dreamed again, I saw seven ears of corn, full and good; and seven bad ears, small, and thin, and withered, grow up after them: and the thin ears ate up the good ears. When I told all this to the wise men they could not explain it to me.

And Joseph said, The two dreams have one meaning: God has shown Pharaoh what he is going to do. The seven fat cows and the seven good ears of corn are seven years of great plenty. The seven lean cows and the seven bad, withered ears mean seven years of famine. There shall be in the land of Egypt seven years of great plenty, and afterwards there shall be seven years of famine; and all the great plenty shall be used up in the seven years of famine. Therefore the king ought to find a wise, clever man, and set him over the whole land. He ought also to appoint persons in every part of the country to buy up the spare corn during the seven plentiful years, and store it in the king's store-houses until the years of famine come, so that the people shall not die of hunger in the famine.

Then Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find such another as this man, whom God has made so wise?

To Joseph he said, You are wiser and cleverer than any one else, because God is with you, and has showed you all these things: therefore I make you ruler over all the land of Egypt; everything shall be done in it according to your word.

Pharaoh then took off his own ring and put it on Joseph's hand. He also



JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAMS.

put a gold chain about his neck, and had him dressed in fine and beautiful clothes, and made him ride in a splendid carriage.

All these things were meant to tell the people that Joseph was now a very great man and a ruler, and that they must obey him.

During the plentiful years that followed, Joseph bought up all the spare

corn, and he stored in every city the corn that was brought in from the country round about. Whatever Joseph commanded was done, for he was next to the king in the land of Egypt.

Thus you see that nothing his brothers or any one else could do to him could prevent him from becoming a great man and a ruler when God meant he should. After all, they only helped it on; for in all those years in the prison God was making him more fit to be a ruler in Egypt.

Good people learn a great deal from their troubles, and no doubt when Joseph was made a slave and a prisoner, and had no friend but God to help him, he learned to trust in him with all his heart. His own words show us how he had learned that he could do nothing without God's help. That is a very good thing for a ruler or any one else to know.

The seven years of great plenty were now over, and there came seven poor years, in which people could get no food from the fields. Then Joseph opened his storehouses and sold corn to the Egyptians; and people from other countries also came to him to buy corn, because there was a famine in all that part of the world.

In the land of Canaan the fields were bare and empty, and Jacob's sons knew not where to get food for themselves and their children.

One day Jacob said, I hear that there is corn in Egypt; go there and buy some, that we may live and not die.

The ten elder brothers therefore took their asses and set off for Egypt. But Jacob kept Benjamin, his youngest son, at home with himself.

When they got to Egypt, they came and bowed themselves down before the great man who was over all those storehouses of corn.

They knew not that he was their brother Joseph: for when they had seen him last he was slight, and smooth, and boyish; and as he was now nearly forty years old, no doubt he had a grave face, and a long beard, and a fine manly figure.

Joseph, however, knew his brothers. When he saw them bowing down before him, he remembered how his dreams had shown him that he should yet be a greater man than any of them.

But he did not wish to let them know for a while how the dreams that

had made them so angry had now come to pass. So he would not let them know that he could speak their language. He got a man who knew many languages to tell him in Egyptian what it was these men were saying, and to tell them in their own language what he said to them.

In this way he asked them where they came from, and whose sons they were, and if they had any more brothers.

And they replied, We are from Canaan. There are twelve of us. One is dead, and the youngest is at home with our father. And we are come to buy corn.

Joseph looked at them sternly, and said, You are not true men ; you do not really want corn. Our enemies have sent you to find out if we have yet grown too poor to be able to fight them. You are spies.

They answered, No, my lord ; indeed we are not spies. We have told you the truth ; we are come to buy corn.

Joseph said, Now I shall know if you have any truth in you. You tell me that you have another brother. Let one of you go home and fetch him ; I will keep the rest in prison until he returns. And if I find that you are spies, you shall die. And he kept them all in prison for three days.

On the third day he said to them, I will not be cruel to you, for I fear God. One of you shall be kept here, and the others shall go home and carry corn for your children ; and you shall come back here and bring your youngest brother with you. Then I shall believe what you have said, and you shall not die.

The brothers, finding themselves in danger and trouble, said one to another, How wicked and cruel we once were to our young brother ! We saw his trouble and distress, and when he entreated us to have pity on him, we would not listen to him. It is to punish us for that sin that all this is happening to us now.

When they talked in this way before Joseph—for they thought he could not understand their language—he went away by himself and wept. Afterwards he returned, and took his brother Simeon and kept him for a prisoner ; but he sent the others home with their sacks full of corn.



## VII.

### JOSEPH'S JOY.



JOSEPH had told his servants to fill his brothers' sacks with corn, and also to put the money that each man had paid for his corn back into the mouth of his sack.

After his brothers had gone a little way, they stopped at an inn to rest. As one of them opened his sack to get some corn for his ass, he found his money all there in the mouth of his sack.

When the brothers saw this their hearts sank. They feared that the governor of Egypt would now say they were thieves, since they had brought away the corn without paying for it.

When they reached home, they told their father everything that had happened, and how, when they should go again to fetch Simeon, they must bring Benjamin with them.

Jacob was deeply grieved when he heard their story. He said, You are taking all my children from me. I have lost Joseph, and I have lost Simeon, and now you want to take Benjamin. But he shall not go with you; for if any harm were to happen to him on the journey, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

When all the corn was eaten, and the fields were still parched and bare, Jacob said to his sons, Go again, buy us a little food.

They replied, It is of no use to go without Benjamin; for the man said, You shall not see my face except your youngest brother be with you.

At last, after a great deal of persuasion, Jacob consented to let Benjamin go. As he bid his sons good-bye, he said, May God Almighty give you

**FINDING OF THE MONEY.**

mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin.

So they all went down to Egypt, and again stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw them, he desired that they should be brought into his house to dine with him.

The brothers did not know why they were brought to the house. They were sore afraid ; for they still thought that the governor had had their



MEETING OF JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN.

money put into their sacks that he might say they were thieves, and keep them for slaves.

At the door they spoke to Joseph's head-servant, and told him how they

had found the money in their sacks, and that they had brought it back again. But the servant said, Fear not; I received your money: your God has given you treasure in your sacks.

Then he brought Simeon out to them, and told them that they were all to dine with the governor.

They therefore got themselves ready; and when Joseph came home to dinner they bowed themselves down to the earth before him.

Joseph saluted them kindly; and he said, Is your father well, the old man you spoke of? Is he yet alive?

They answered, Your servant our father is well; and again they bowed down their heads.

Then Joseph looked upon Benjamin, and said, Is this your youngest brother?—God be gracious to you, my son.

He could say no more, for his heart was full of tenderness when he looked on his own mother's son; and he went away into his chamber, and wept there for a little while.

As soon as he could again speak calmly, he came back and desired his servants to set food on the table. When his brothers were seated, he helped them all, but he gave Benjamin five times as much as he gave the others. And they all ate and drank, and were merry together.

In the morning, as soon as it was light, Joseph's brothers set out to return home.

After they had gone a little way, Joseph's head-servant hastened after them. When he had overtaken them, he said, Why have you behaved so badly as to take away my master's silver cup that he drinks out of?

They replied, God forbid that we should do such a thing. Do you not remember how we brought back the money that we found in our sacks? How then should we steal silver or gold out of your master's house? Search our sacks, and if you find the cup, let the man with whom you find it die, and take the rest of us for slaves.

The man replied, He with whom the cup is found shall be taken for a slave; the others shall go free.

At once they took down their sacks and opened them; and there was

each man's money, as before, in the mouth of his sack, and in Benjamin's sack was the silver cup: for Joseph had commanded his servant to hide it there while he and his brothers were feasting together.

The brothers were now in great trouble and terror. They returned with the man to Joseph's house, and there they fell down before Joseph on the ground.

Joseph said, What is this that you have done? Do you not know that I am able to find out what people have done?

One of the brothers, whose name was Judah, answered, What shall we say to my lord? or how shall we clear ourselves? We are all my lord's servants.

But Joseph said, The man with whom the cup is found shall be my servant. As for the rest of you, you shall return to your father in peace.

Judah then drew nearer to Joseph and said, O my lord, our father is an old man, and this is a child of his old age. He is the only one left of his mother's children, and his father loves him. When we persuaded our father to let him come with us, he said, His brother went out from me, and was torn in pieces by a wild beast. If you take this one also from me, and any harm happen to him, you shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, if we go back without the lad, our father will die. Therefore, I pray that you will take me for your slave, and let him go back with his brothers; for I promised my father to bring the lad home again safely, and I cannot return without him and see our father's great sorrow.

When Joseph heard his brother Judah pleading thus, and knew how his father had been grieving for him all those years, he could no longer pretend to be a stranger. He sent all his servants out of the room, and when he was left alone with his brothers, he wept aloud, and said, I am Joseph: is my father yet alive?

His brothers could not speak a word; they were terrified at what they heard.

Then Joseph said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But do not grieve because you sold me. It was not you who sent me here, but God; for there are five years of famine yet to come, and God sent me

before you to save your lives and the lives of these Egyptians; and he has made me a ruler in the land of Egypt. And now, return to my father, and tell him his son Joseph sends for him and his children and grandchildren to come and live in Egypt; and I will feed you all during the years of famine that are yet to come.

Then Joseph fell on Benjamin's neck and wept, and he kissed all his brothers; and after that, they took courage and talked with him.

Joseph gave his brothers waggons to bring back their goods in, and food for their journey; and he sent his father ten asses laden with beautiful gifts, and ten asses laden with corn and bread for his journey.

Then Jacob's sons returned once more to Canaan; and when they came to their father they said, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!

The old man could not believe this news, and his heart fainted within him. But when he heard Joseph's message to him, and saw the waggons that were sent to fetch him, he grew strong again; and he said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

They took their goods and their cattle, and all that they had, and they put their father and their wives and their children into the waggons, and set off to go to Egypt.

When they came to the borders of that land, Joseph came out in his fine chariot to meet his father, and they embraced each other and cried for joy. And Jacob said, Now I am willing to die, since I have seen your face again.

Jacob's family was now a very large one. Counting Joseph and his two sons, who were already in Egypt, Jacob with his children and grandchildren were in all seventy persons.

God had told Jacob that in Egypt this family should grow into a great nation, and after many years they should be brought back again into the land of Canaan, to have it for their own.

Pharaoh received this great family very kindly; and he gave them a place called Goshen, where there was good grass, to keep their cattle in. So in Goshen they lived, and they were called "the children of Israel"—for



MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.

Israel, you know, was another name which God had long ago given Jacob. And Joseph gave them food all the time the famine lasted.

After some years Jacob died, and all his sons mourned and wept for him. They carried his body into Canaan, for before he died he had desired them to bury him there in the place where Abraham and Isaac were buried.

Joseph continued to be a wise and good ruler in Egypt, and did good to all the people under him for many years after this, for he lived to be an old man and to have great-grandchildren.

Before he died he said to his kindred, the children of Israel, God will one day bring you out of this land, back into the land which he promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph made them promise that when that day came they would take his body with them, and bury it in the land of Canaan where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were buried.





# THE RESCUE FROM EGYPT.

---

## I.

### HOW MOSES WAS SAVED.



O you remember the promises that God gave first to Abraham, and afterwards repeated to his son Isaac and to his grandson Jacob?

You know one of them was that their families should become a great many people. This is how that promise first came to pass.

Jacob's grandchildren grew up in Egypt, and became the fathers of families. In time they grew old and died, and their children were the men and women.

These children, too, were strong and healthy, and most of them lived to be fathers and mothers, so that after a time the family of Jacob, or Israel, became a very large one,—quite a nation in themselves; and they were clever and prosperous,\* and the land was filled with them.

It happened, long after Joseph was dead, and after that Pharaoh who promoted Joseph was dead, and when another Pharaoh was king in Egypt, that the Egyptians grew envious of this great family that was growing so rapidly in power and riches, as well as in numbers.

\* "Waxed exceeding mighty" (Ex. i. 7).

This new Pharaoh said, Behold, the children of Israel are more and stronger than we are; come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they grow too many, and, the next time we go to war, join with our enemies, and get away out of the land.

The Israelites were therefore set to make buildings for Pharaoh; and task-masters were set over them, who required of them hard and wearisome work. But the more they were ill-treated the more they grew.

The Egyptians were grieved because of the children of Israel. They made their lives bitter with hard work, in brick and in mortar, and in all manner of service in the field.

You see, the Egyptians did not want to get rid of the children of Israel, who were clever and useful, as their children are to this day. They wanted to keep them slaves, and prevent them growing stronger and cleverer than themselves.

Pharaoh soon saw that, in spite of all his severe treatment, they still increased and were strong. He therefore ordered that all their baby boys should be thrown into the river Nile; but the girls might be let live, for they could not grow up to be soldiers and fight the Egyptians.

One day after this wicked order had been given, a beautiful little boy was born.

His father and mother could not bear to think of having him drowned in the river, so for three months they kept him hidden away. When they could not hide him any more his mother made a basket of bulrushes, and daubed it over with slime and pitch, to keep out the water. Into this basket she put her pretty baby, and laid him among the tall reeds that grew by the brink of the river, and left her little daughter to watch him from a distance.

One day Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. She saw the basket, and sent one of her maids to fetch it. When she opened it, the pretty babe cried, and she knew that he was one of the Israelites' children, and she pitied him.

His sister, who had been watching what was done, came up and said, Shall I fetch one of the Israelite women to nurse the child for you?



FINDING OF MOSES.

The princess replied, Do so. And the girl went and brought the child's mother.

Pharaoh's daughter said, Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay you. The mother took the child gladly, and nursed him.

The baby grew ; and when there was no need for his mother to nurse him any longer, she brought him again to Pharaoh's daughter. The princess brought him up as her own son, and she called him Moses.

The Egyptians were the best scholars in the world at that time, and Moses was taught all the things they knew, so that when he had grown up to be a man, he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians, and was mighty in word and in deed.

He never forgot, however, that though he was called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and lived in a palace, and had all sorts of fine things, he was really one of the Israelites.

He saw how badly his own people were treated ; and the more he saw, the more he longed to help them.

One day, in defending one of them from cruelty, he killed an Egyptian, and buried him in the sand.

When Pharaoh heard this he was very angry, and would have killed Moses ; but the latter ran away, and escaped into a country called Midian.

In Midian, Moses sat down by a well. While sitting there, seven young women, the daughters of a wise and great man called Jethro, came to the well to draw water for their father's sheep.

The rude, wild shepherds of that land tried to drive them away, for the shepherds wanted to keep all the water for their own sheep.

Then Moses stood up and helped Jethro's daughters. He not only prevented the shepherds from hurting them, but he also drew water for their sheep.

Moses, you know, was a good man and a gentleman, and would not therefore allow any one to be rude or cruel to women.

When Jethro's daughters went home, their father said to them, How is it you are come back so soon to-day ?

They answered, An Egyptian saved us from the hands of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us and watered our flock.

Then Jethro said, Why have you left the man there ? Where is he ? Call him, that he may eat with us.

Moses was then brought into the house. After that he lived in Midian



MOSES HIDING THE EGYPTIAN IN THE SAND.

for forty years, keeping sheep for Jethro. And he married one of Jethro's daughters.

All that time Moses never forgot his own people. When he had a son he called the boy Gershom, which means a *stranger*, for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land. Yet though he never gave up caring for the Israelites, and being grieved for their troubles, he now saw that the way in which he had tried to help them was not a good one, for it had ended in his being obliged to run away and hide himself. And after a long, long time God taught him a better way to help them.

## II.

### WHAT MOSES DID IN EGYPT.



USE as Moses was when he had learned all the knowledge of the Egyptians, God had yet many things to teach him ; and no doubt the lonely hillsides of Midian, where he kept his sheep, were the best place for him to learn them.

At last, after forty years, God found that Moses was now a fit person to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. This is how he sent him to do it.

One day, when Moses had led his sheep to a wild, lonely place, he saw there a bush that seemed to be all on fire, and yet it was not burned up. When he went near to look at it, God spoke to him out of the flame, and said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Moses hid his face ; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And God said, I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry ; for I know their sorrows ; and I am come to save them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up into a good land. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Moses was frightened at being sent on such work as this. He knew how hard it would be to make the Israelites believe that God had really sent him, and then to persuade Pharaoh to let them go.

But God said to him, Certainly I will be with you. Then he told him what he should say to the children of Israel, and how he should tell them





MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH.

that it was the God of their fathers who had sent him to them, and that God had seen their sorrows, and was going to save them.

Though the Israelites were now very ignorant, and had fallen into many of the ways of the Egyptians, yet the old people used still to tell the children how God had long ago spoken to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and how he had promised to give the land of Canaan to their families,—so that when Moses spoke to them in this way they would at least understand what he meant.

As Moses still feared that they would not believe him, God told him to



throw down the stick he held in his hand. He threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses was afraid of it. Then God told him to take hold of the serpent by the tail; and when he did so, it became a stick in his hand again. And God said that he should do the same thing before his people, and it would be a sign to them that God had spoken to him.

When God had comforted Moses a little more, and had given him courage, telling him how he would certainly bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and give them the land of Canaan for their own, and that Pharaoh should not be able to hinder, Moses took his wife and his sons and set out for Egypt.

On the way he met his brother Aaron, whom God had sent to meet him. They kissed each other, and were glad to meet; and Moses told Aaron all that the Lord God had said.

God had sent Aaron to help Moses. Aaron was to speak to the people, and Moses was to tell him what to say; for though Moses had a great deal of knowledge, he was not clever at speaking, and he did not like to have to speak before all those people. Aaron always knew the best words to use; and he had a fine, clear, pleasant voice, that made people like to listen to him.

In Egypt, Moses and Aaron called together all the chief men of the children of Israel, and told them how God had seen their sorrows and was about to help them; and Moses did the signs in their sight. Then they believed, and they bowed their heads and worshipped God.

Moses and Aaron then went to Pharaoh, and told him that the Lord God desired him to let the children of Israel go.

Pharaoh answered, Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

And Pharaoh ordered that the children of Israel should have harder work than ever, so that they should not have time to listen to Moses and Aaron, or any heart to think about getting away. More work was therefore laid upon them; and when they could not do it they were beaten.

In the bitterness of their hearts they turned upon Moses, and said it was he who had brought this new trouble upon them.

Moses then cried to God to help him. And God sent him again to Pharaoh; but Pharaoh would not listen, although Moses did before him those signs which God had bid him do. Therefore God sent plagues on Pharaoh and on all the Egyptians.

At one time they could get no water fit to drink; at another, great



THE PLAGUE OF FROGS.

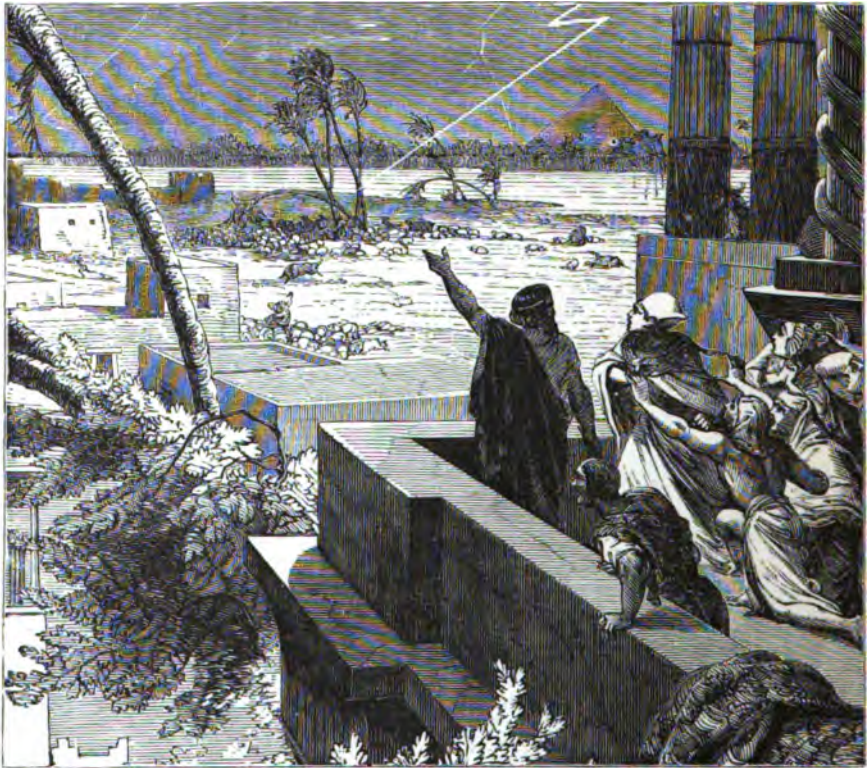
numbers of their cattle died; and then a painful sickness came upon the people, and those who took it were all covered with sores.

Instead of learning from these things to fear God and to obey his command, Pharaoh's heart was hardened more and more.

Sometimes when he and all the Egyptians were in bitter trouble and distress, he would send for Moses and Aaron, and say to them, Pray to your God to take away this plague from us, and then I will let you go. But

when it was taken away his heart grew hard again, and he would not let the people go.

At last, when a terrible storm of lightning and hail had destroyed all that was in the fields, both man and beast, and every herb and tree, Pharaoh's servants said to him, Let the men go, lest there should be any more harm done to us ; do you not yet see how all the land of Egypt is being destroyed ?



THE PLAGUE OF LIGHTNING AND HAIL.

Then Pharaoh sent again for Moses and Aaron, and told them that the men might go away, but that their wives, their children, and their cattle must be left behind.

Moses answered, We must take with us not only our wives and our children, but also our cattle, and all that we possess.

Moses and Aaron were then driven out from Pharaoh's presence, for Pharaoh would not listen when they asked this.

At last God said, I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and after that he will let you go. And when he lets you go, he will thrust you out.

The children of Israel were now warned to be ready upon a certain night to leave Egypt very quickly; for God would on that night send the last great plague on the Egyptians: the eldest son in every family should die,—from the first-born of the king to that of the poorest Egyptian.

Every household of the children of Israel, moreover, was commanded to kill a lamb, and to sprinkle some of its blood on the door-posts and on the upper part of the door. When the destroying angel came and saw the blood upon the door, then he would pass over that house, and the first-born of the Israelites should not be killed.

The flesh of the lamb they were to roast and eat. It was the last meal they should eat in Egypt; and they must eat it hastily, every man with his shoes on his feet and his staff in his hand, ready to start on their journey.

The children of Israel did so. In every house they killed a lamb. Some of the blood they sprinkled upon the door-posts; and they roasted the flesh, and the whole family ate it together, each one with his shoes on his feet and his staff in his hand.

They called this meal the "Lord's passover;" for while they were eating it the angel was passing over every house that had the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door-posts.

That night God sent an angel to destroy the eldest son in every house in Egypt. Only such houses as had the blood sprinkled on the door-posts did the angel pass over.

At midnight there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house of the Egyptians in which there was not one dead.

Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and bid the Israelites take





MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

all they possessed with them, and be gone out of the land. And the Egyptians begged them to go away at once,—Else, said they, we shall be all dead men. And they gave them jewels of silver and of gold, and hastened them away.

The Israelites therefore went out that night from their homes in Egypt, and gathered together at a place called Succoth.

That was a night to be remembered for ever by the children of Israel. In years to come they would talk about it to their children and their grandchildren.

In order that the memory of that night might never pass away from among them, Moses told them that on that day of every year they must keep a happy feast, and call it the Feast of the Passover. Then the old people should always tell the children how God had brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and how the angel who was sent to kill the first-born children of the Egyptians passed over every house that had the blood sprinkled on the door-posts.

To this day the children of Israel keep the Feast of the Passover.

### III.

## GOING FORTH OUT OF EGYPT.



THE children of Israel set out to go into the land where their father Abraham had lived many years before—the land which God told Abraham should yet be given to his family.

Probably such a large number of people starting all together to find a new home has never been seen at any other time.

There were men, and women, and little children; and they took with them their cattle and their goods, and the silver and gold they had got from the Egyptians. They took also the bones of Joseph; for, as you may remember, he had made his relations promise that he should be buried at last in Canaan.

God showed them the way to go. He went before them, and they saw in the day-time a pillar of cloud, and in the night a pillar of fire. Where it went they followed, and where it stopped they rested. Thus they were led throughout the whole of their journey.

They were not led into Canaan by the shortest way. That would have brought them at once to a country where a strong warlike people lived, and the Israelites were not good soldiers at this time. They had a great many things yet to learn.

They were led first to the shore of the Red Sea, and they encamped there.

Pharaoh had already begun to be sorry for having sent all those clever workmen away. He had got over his terror.

When he heard that they were encamped by the Red Sea, he thought he

could soon make them come back. He said, They cannot cross the water, for they have no boats; and if I come upon them suddenly with chariots and horsemen, they will not have time to go round by the head of the sea, so they will have to come back with me.

He therefore got together a great army, with chariots and horsemen, and followed after the children of Israel.

When the Israelites saw them in the distance they were terrified, for the water lay before them, and they saw no way of escape. They said to Moses, Why have you brought us out here? We never wanted to come. Were there not graves enough in Egypt, that you have brought us here to die?

Then Moses cried to God. And God said to him, Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift you up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

Moses therefore said to the people, Fear not: the Egyptians whom you have seen to-day, you shall see no more again for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall not have to fight at all.

Moses then stretched out his hand over the sea; and God caused it to go back by a strong east wind all that night. And the children of Israel went through upon dry land.

On their right hand was the sea which the east wind drove back; on their left were deep lakes of sea-water, from which the tide never ebbed out. There was a dry sandy path made for the children of Israel between the two waters, and the Egyptians could not come near them on the right hand or on the left.\*

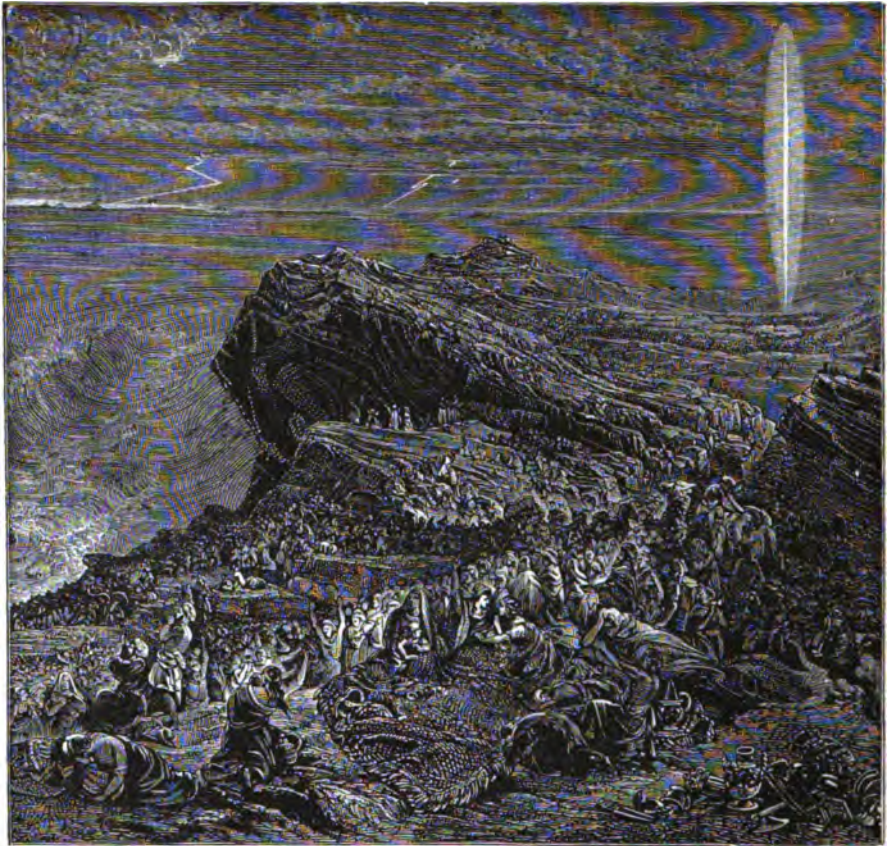
When they tried to follow them by that path through the midst of the waters, God troubled the great army of the Egyptians, and made their chariot wheels to go heavily, so that they said, Let us return; for the Lord fights for Israel against the Egyptians.

In the morning, when all the children of Israel had got to the other side of the sea, God said to Moses, Stretch forth your hand again over the sea.

Moses did so, and the sea returned to its former place.

\* See "Speaker's Commentary" on Ex. xiv. 21, 22.





PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

The Egyptians fled against it ; but the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea. That day the children of Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. Now they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.

Then Moses and all the men sang joyfully together a beautiful song of triumph which he taught them.

The women also took up the burden of the song, saying, Sing ye to the



DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH AND HIS HOST.

Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. And they played on timbrels, and danced in time to the music as they sang.

This joyous state, however, did not last very long. They had still a long journey to take through the lonely wilderness; and as soon as ever they felt the want of anything, they seemed to forget that God was taking care of them, and that He who had brought them through the Red Sea would also supply all their wants.

Instead of asking God for what they wanted, they turned on Moses, and said that he had brought them into the wilderness to die. And sometimes they were ready to tear him in pieces.

But Moses had great patience with them. He told all his troubles to God, and the Lord never failed to give all that was wanting for the support of this great family in the wilderness.

When they had no bread, he sent from heaven food enough for every one of them. They used to find this food very early in the morning, lying

on the ground all around their tents. It looked like hoar-frost on the ground, and it had a sweet fresh taste; and the people called it "manna." Early every morning each person gathered as much as he wanted for the day; and when the sun was hot, what had been left of it on the ground melted away.



GATHERING MANNA.

Soon after God had sent them this manna they came to a place where there was no water. Now thirst is a very painful thing, and people would soon die of it, especially in a hot, dry country. When therefore they saw that there was no water, they were very angry with Moses. They said he



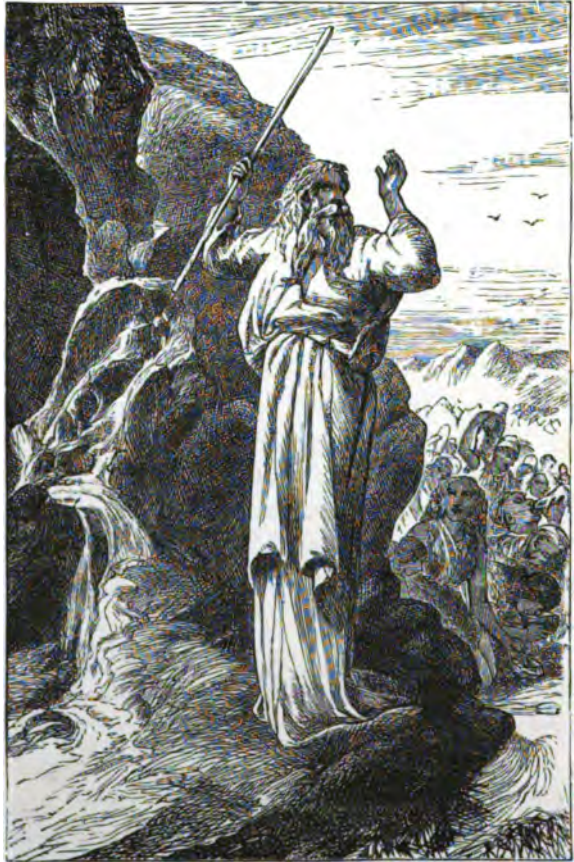
had brought them where their little children and their cattle would die of thirst.

Moses cried to God, and said, What shall I do for the people? They are almost ready to stone me.

Then God caused a spring of water to burst from a rock in the hill-side when Moses had struck it with his rod.

God had even more patience than Moses with these people. He knew that they were very ignorant, and that it would take a great deal of very patient teaching to make them trust and obey him. And he knows, too, how painful it is to any living creature to want food or drink.

He did not at this time punish them for their grumbling and complaining; he only sent them what they wanted. But afterwards, when they had been a long time in the wilderness, and God had been supplying their wants and taking care of them all the time, and when they ought to have trusted him with all their hearts, they were more than once punished for grumbling and rebelling. Some of them



THE WATER BURSTING FROM THE ROCK.

learned from terrible punishments what God's tender care had failed to teach them.

While they were in the wilderness, God gave Moses laws for the children of Israel; and Moses told these laws to the people, and also wrote them in a book, that they might never be forgotten.

God gave them first the ten commandments, which I am sure you have often heard. I daresay you are learning to repeat them. These are God's laws for every one, and no one is good who disobeys them.

He then gave Moses other laws, which were especially for the children of Israel, directing them what to do when they were all settled in their own land—how they were to behave to one another, and how they should settle disputes, and in what way they should punish dishonest and wicked people who would not obey the laws.

God also gave them many rules telling them how they must worship him; and Aaron and his sons and their relations were set apart to take charge of everything belonging to that worship.

They were called priests. Aaron was the "high priest;" and when he died, his eldest son was to be the high priest.

These men were to kill the lambs and the other animals that people brought for sacrifices and offerings to God, and to burn parts of those animals upon the altar in that place where God chose that they should worship him.

My little friends, do you want to know why people had to kill a lamb and to pour out its blood on the ground when they came to worship God in the old times?

Well, that lamb was a sacrifice for sin. It was as if the lamb died instead of the sinner who deserved to die.

Do you remember how it was said of our Saviour, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world? That was because he was offered in sacrifice for the sin of mankind. And we do not offer any more sacrifices now, for God has told us that Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins for ever.

Aaron and his sons had now to offer all those sacrifices, and to teach the

people all about worshipping God, and about the feast of the Passover, which they were to keep every year, to make them remember how the angel, who was sent to destroy the eldest children of the Egyptians, had passed over the houses that had blood upon the door-posts. There were also other feasts that the Israelites were to keep, and Aaron and his sons had to teach them all about these, and to show them what to do.

#### IV.

### ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF.



WHEN the children of Israel had been rather more than a year on their journey, they came to the borders of the land of Canaan.

Moses sent twelve men into the land to search it out, and to bring word what sort of land it was, and what sort of people lived there, what kind of towns they lived in, and whether they were good soldiers.

The children of Israel might have entered in and taken possession of the land at this time, had they only learned the lesson of trusting God entirely ; but they had not.

When the twelve spies returned from searching the land, they brought back with them some fruit which they had gathered in it, and a great cluster of grapes, which they carried between two of them on a staff, and some other food, all rich and good. They said, We have seen the land ; and it is indeed a rich and beautiful land, and this is some of the fruit of it. But the people there are very large and strong, and they live in cities with great strong walls ; and we felt ourselves like grasshoppers near the men of that country. We shall never be able to fight with them, for they are stronger than we.

Two of the spies, however, whose names were Joshua and Caleb, said, Let us go up at once and possess the land, for the Lord is with us ; therefore we are well able to overcome those big men.

When the children of Israel heard about the great strong men they should have to fight with, they wept and wailed, and said, Oh, that we had



THE RETURN OF THE SPIES





died in Egypt or in the wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us into this land to be killed? Let us choose a man to be our captain, and let us return into Egypt.

They would not listen to the two men who tried to encourage them to go on into Canaan, and to trust in God, who had promised to give them the land. They even wanted to stone them for speaking of it.

God was angry with the people for their unbelief. He said to Moses, How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be before they believe me? I will destroy them, and I will make you the father of a greater and stronger people than they are.

Then Moses prayed for the people, as he had often done before, and entreated God to forgive them this time also.

And the Lord answered, I have pardoned. Yet all those men who have seen my glory, and what I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have not believed me, they surely shall not see the land which I promised to their fathers, but they shall die in the wilderness. Their children shall come into the land; but you shall yet wander for forty years in the wilderness, until all the people that were grown up when you came out of Egypt shall have died. But Joshua and Caleb shall enter the land. To-morrow you shall return into the wilderness.

The people mourned greatly when they heard what God had said. They now wanted to go in at once and take possession of the land; but they were not allowed.

They had refused to believe God, and they had over and over again said, We shall die in this wilderness; so now they must stay in the wilderness until they died.

In the wilderness they stayed for forty years, stopping sometimes for a good while at one place and then removing to another.

All that time God took care of them, and showed them the way in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When they could get no bread, he gave them manna; and he gave them springs of water when they were in dry places.

He never ceased to teach them; but, as you have seen, they were slow

to learn, and their hearts were stubborn, therefore God sometimes taught them by very terrible punishments.

Once when they had to leave a place where they had been staying for some time—I daresay it was a pleasant place—and to go off on a journey through a dry, dreary part of the wilderness, they began to grumble, after their usual fashion, and to take up their old cry of, Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is neither water nor bread in this place, and we hate this manna.

Then God sent among them small poisonous serpents, whose bite was very painful; and many of the people died, for the bites burned like fire.

In their distress the people said to Moses, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.

Moses therefore prayed for the people. And God said, Make a serpent of brass like those serpents that have bitten the people, and set it upon a pole in the sight of the people; and when any one that is bitten looks upon it, he shall be cured and shall live.

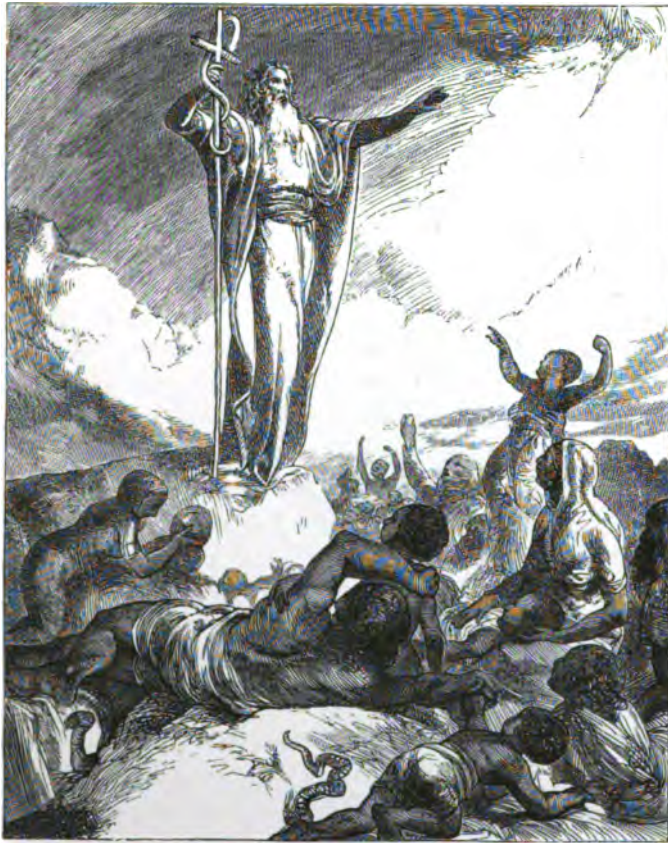
Moses did as God commanded, and the people who were bitten were cured when they looked on the serpent of brass.

Long after this time our Lord Jesus said that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so should he be lifted up, that every one who believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

At last, when those long forty years were all but ended, the time came when Moses himself must die.

He had been God's faithful servant for many years, and he had been a wise and good ruler over the children of Israel, who, like a great many other people, were often both unreasonable and ungrateful.

It was a heavy burden to have the care of them; and I am sure Moses could never have borne it all through his long life if he had not told all his troubles to God, and if he had not been a great deal with God and learned sweet and beautiful lessons from him. This made him wise and gentle and patient, as it will make you and me, my little friends, if we do the same. It made his cares and troubles ever so much easier to bear, so that they did



THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

not wear him out ; for when he was a very old man his eye was still bright, and he had not grown feeble.

Once for a little while Moses lost his quiet trust in God.\* He lost all patience with the provoking Israelites, and he spoke impatient and unbelieving words.

Then God said that because Moses and Aaron had not believed him and honoured him before the people, therefore they should not lead the people

\* Num. xx. 12.

into the promised land. Thus you see that our Father in heaven will punish his very dearest and best children when they disobey him.

People like Moses, however, soon become very sorry when they have done wrong, and they confess that they have sinned, and do not do the same things again. God then comforts them, and that makes the trouble much easier to bear.

So Aaron died peacefully with his eldest son beside him, and his brother Moses near him also. And Aaron's son became high priest in his stead.

Soon after this, when the people were once more on the borders of that beautiful, promised land, God said to Moses, Come up into this mountain and look down on the land which I have given to the children of Israel; and when you have seen it, you too shall go where your fathers are and where Aaron your brother has gone.

At this time God had just given the children of Israel great victories over some of the peoples that lived on the borders of the promised land, and who had come out to fight with them. The children of Israel had also got possession of that border-land, and they were staying there. So Moses said, O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness. I pray thee, let me go over and see that good land that is beyond the river.

But the Lord said to him, Speak no more to me of this matter. Go to the top of the hill, and lift up your eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with your eyes; for you shall not go over Jordan.

Moses then knew he must not ask any more for that; so he prayed that God would set some one over the people who should be wise and fit to lead them. God desired him to take Joshua and lay his hands on him in the presence of all the people, and to give him charge before the people that he should in future be their leader; and Moses should put some of his honour upon Joshua, that the children of Israel might obey him.

Moses did so. Then, before he died, he spoke many beautiful words to the children of Israel, and he wrote them in a book, that they might remember them for ever.

He reminded them of all that God had done for them from the time they

came out of Egypt, and he repeated all the laws that God had given them, and urged them very earnestly to keep all those laws, and to obey and love God always. He told them also how God would bless them if they did so, and how he would punish them if they were disobedient.

Many times long afterwards, when the children of Israel were in bitter trouble, they had reason to remember what Moses had said about this. And they did remember it. They remembered, too, how Moses had told them that when they were sorry for their sins and turned to God, God would forgive them and save them out of their troubles. And some day they will remember this once more.\*

Well, after Moses had read for the people, in very beautiful words, all these histories and warnings, and after he had blessed them once more, he went up from the plain where they were staying unto the mountain of Nebo.

There he climbed a high point of the mountain, and from that he looked upon the beautiful land into which the children of Israel were soon to enter. And the Lord said to him, This is the land which I promised to Abraham, to Isaac,

and to Jacob, that I would give it to their children. I have caused you to see it with your eyes ; but you shall not go over thither.

So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there on the mountain ; and no one knows where his grave is to this day.

The children of Israel had still many battles to fight and much work to do before they should have quiet possession of the promised land ; and no



MOSES LOOKING DOWN UPON THE PROMISED LAND.

\* Rom. xi. 25-27.

doubt it was happier for Moses to be taken quietly away to be with God whom he loved. Though he was still strong and healthy, I think he must have been a little weary with his long life, for he was a very old man, and old men like to rest.

The children of Israel mourned and wept for Moses thirty days.

Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom ; for Moses had laid his hands on him, and God had given him wisdom. The children of Israel obeyed him now. But there came no other prophet like Moses, to whom the Lord spoke face to face.

V.

J O S H U A.



THE people who lived in the land of Canaan had been getting worse and worse since the time that Abraham had lived among them.

In Abraham's time God had said of them, The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full; that is, they had not yet become so bad that they must be destroyed at once, like those people who were drowned in the Flood, or like the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, who had quite given up caring for what was right, or wanting to be ever a bit better. At that time they had not yet become so bad that God would not let them have any power or have a country of their own any longer, like many other people we read of in history, who, when they had given up caring to do right, or even being afraid to do what was wrong, were crushed and conquered, and had their power taken away from them by some other people.

That is just what would happen to us very soon if we gave up fearing God, and trying to be honest and true and just; so we had better be good, for if God saw it best to punish us in this way, guns and ships and soldiers could not save us.

These people in Canaan were now as bad and cruel as they could be. They had invented for themselves stories about gods who like themselves were bad and cruel; and they did cruel things to please them, so that the more they worshipped those false gods the more hopelessly bad they became.

God now saw that it was time to destroy those wicked nations. He com-



manded his chosen people to go into that land and drive out and kill the inhabitants of it.

Joshua was chosen to be their captain, to lead them into that promised land. He was good and brave, and he knew how to lead an army to war.



JOSHUA AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST.

The children of Israel had yet many battles to fight. But they were a better and wiser people now than when they left Egypt. They had at last learned to obey God and to trust him; and because they trusted him they were brave.

Before Moses died they had already fought against two kings who lived on the east side of the river Jordan, and had conquered them and taken possession of their land. But in order to get into that part of the land where Abraham had lived, they must cross that river.

Not far from the river, on the other side, stood the city of Jericho. It was the first place they were to take pos-

session of; and before they all crossed the river, Joshua sent two men to see this city, and to find out all about it.

These men came to Jericho, and went into a house, built on the wall of the city, which belonged to a woman named Rahab.

The king of Jericho heard that some of the Israelites had come to find

out all about the country. He therefore sent a message to Rahab, saying, Give up those men that have come to your house ; for they are spies.



RAHAB HIDING THE SPIES.

But Rahab hid the two men under a quantity of flax that she had spread out to dry upon the flat roof of her house.

When those who had come to seek the spies were gone away, thinking to catch them on their way back to Joshua, Rahab came up to them on the

house-top, and said to them, The people of this land are in terror because of you ; for we have heard how the Lord your God dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt. And lately we have heard how you overcame and killed those two kings on the other side of the Jordan ; and when we heard that, our hearts failed us, and there is no more courage left in any of us : for the Lord *your* God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Now, therefore, since I have shown you kindness, promise me that when you get possession of this land you will show kindness to me and my relations, and save us from death.

The men solemnly promised her that if she did not betray them, or say where they were gone, then they would certainly deal kindly with her when the Lord should give the city to the Israelites.

Rahab then let them out through a window and down over the wall of the city ; for her house was upon the wall, and the city gates were shut. And she said to them, Hide yourselves in the mountain until the men who are seeking you shall have come back to the city ; then you can go your way safely.

It was with a scarlet cord that Rahab let them down by the wall ; so they said to her, When we come into the land, do you bring your father and your mother and your brothers and sisters into this house, and bind this scarlet line in the window, so that we shall know the house, and we will save every one that is in it ; but if any of your relations leave the house, it is their own fault if they are killed.

The spies went and hid in the mountain for three days, until their pursuers had returned to Jericho. After that they came down and went over the river to Joshua.

They told him all that had happened—how the people of the land were in terror because of the children of Israel, and how they had promised Rahab to save her and her family.

At last the time was come for the whole of the children of Israel to go over the river Jordan into the land promised to their fathers long before.

The Jordan is a very rapid-flowing river, and although at some seasons

it is shallow, and can be easily crossed at certain places, yet in the early summer it is full up to the top of its steep banks.

It was early summer now; and though the two spies most likely swam across that full, rapid river, as very good swimmers sometimes do, yet a whole army never could do it. God therefore made a dry path for his people through the river Jordan, as he had made one for them through the Red Sea. It was not done in quite the same way, but it was just as wonderful.

Joshua made the people bring twelve large stones out of the middle of the river, and set them up on the other side of it, at the place where they entered into the land of Canaan. He wanted the Israelites to remember for ever how God had brought them over the river at that spot, and that they might tell their children about it in time to come.

The people in Canaan were more terrified than ever when they heard how the children of Israel had crossed the Jordan. The city of Jericho was carefully guarded; and no one was allowed either to come in or go out through the gates.

The children of Israel were commanded to make war on Jericho, in quite a different way from that in which they had overcome the kings on the other side of the river, and they did just as God commanded them.

They marched all round the walls of the city once every day for six days. Some of the armed men went first, and then came the priests, some of them blowing with trumpets, and the rest of the army followed after. They all marched round the walls of the city once, and then they returned to their camp.

On the seventh day they rose very early in the morning, for on that day they had to march round the walls of the city seven times.

When they had marched round the seventh time, the priests blew a long



THE PRIESTS BLOWING THE TRUMPETS.

loud blast upon the trumpets. And Joshua said to the people, Shout ; for the Lord hath given you the city.

The people therefore shouted, and the walls of the city fell. All the armed men went in and took the city, and killed every living creature in it, as God had commanded, only Rahab and all who were in her house they saved. They brought them away out of the city, and they burned Jericho to the ground.

Rahab and her family were saved, because she had believed God and shown kindness to his people. Afterwards she became the wife of one of the Israelites, and her children were greatly blessed.

The children of Israel took no more towns in the way they had taken Jericho. Joshua, however, was a great general, and God gave him the victory over all who fought against him, so that at last the Israelites had possession of almost the whole of Canaan, and God gave them rest from all their enemies.

In a few places some of the old heathen inhabitants were still left, but they were now too weak and too much afraid to make war on the children of Israel.

God had said that he would not at *once* drive out all the old inhabitants, because there were not enough of the Israelites to fill the whole land, and if any part of it was left empty, fierce wild beasts would increase in those places ; so some of the old inhabitants were left there for a while.

The children of Israel were warned that they must not mix with them, nor on any account get married to them ; for then they would learn all their bad ways and become afraid of their false gods, and worship them and do cruel things to please them. The Lord would therefore be greatly displeased with his people, and he would punish them for those sins as he had punished the heathen people whose land he had given to them.

These heathen people used to make images of their gods, and bow down before the images and worship them. An image of a pretended god is called an idol ; and they used to think the idol could help them and do them good if they only pleased it with plenty of sacrifices.

The children of Israel were commanded to throw down the altars where

the heathen offered those sacrifices, and to burn their images, lest they should ever be tempted to worship them.

Before Joshua died, when he had become a very old man, he called together all the judges and the great men of the children of Israel, and reminded them of all that God had commanded about this, and of all that Moses had taught them, and of all that God had done for them; and he said, Choose this day whether you will serve the Lord, or serve the gods of the people who dwelt in this land before us.

All the judges answered, We will serve the Lord our God; we will obey his voice.

Then Joshua wrote those words in a book, that they might be remembered for ever.

## VI.

### THE TRIUMPH OVER MIDIAN.



THE children of Israel were now settled in the land of Canaan.

They had no king over them. The Lord God was their king ; and they had judges to rule them according to the laws that God had given.

The priests helped the judges. When a judge wanted to know what was best to be done, he asked the high priest, and the high priest inquired of God. As long as people really wanted to find out what was right, and to do it, God never failed to direct them.

The Israelites obeyed God all the days of Joshua and of those judges who had been with Joshua. But in time these men grew old and died. All those people who had been men and women when they came into Canaan also passed away, and it was their children or grandchildren who were now the men and women.

These younger Israelites had not seen with their own eyes all the wonderful things that God had done for his people. They had only heard them as old histories from the lips of their parents ; and they did not take them to heart or learn from them as they should have done.

They did not obey the command to make no friends with the wicked people of Canaan who remained among them, and to throw down the altars where they carried on their cruel worship. Therefore God said that he would not drive out those people before them any more, but would leave them there bowing down before their images and worshipping their cruel gods, to prove whether the children of Israel would still worship the Lord only.

Soon the children of Israel began to mix with those people, and at length to forget the Lord their God and worship those false gods. Then God allowed some of the peoples that lived in other countries to come and make war on his chosen people, and to conquer them and make them very miserable, until, in their distress, they turned to the Lord again, and cried to him to help them.

Whenever this happened God pitied them and helped them, and set over them a brave, wise judge, who led them out to battle against their enemies and got the victory. The land then would have rest all the days of that judge, for he made the people obey God's laws.

But, alas! when that judge was dead the people would turn to the false gods again; and this happened many times.

Well, one time the children of Israel had been going on with those bad ways, and God gave them up to the Midianites, who oppressed them for seven years. In those years the Israelites sowed their corn, but as soon as it was ripe the Midianites came and took it all away. They took also the fruit and the cattle; and in some places they got possession of the fields and villages.

The Israelites were driven away to hide in caves and rocks among the mountains, a few scattered and frightened people; while the Midianites, with their tents and their cattle and their camels, covered the whole face of the country.

In their trouble the Israelites cried to God; and God heard them, and chose a fit man to help them.

One day an angel was sent to a place where a young man called Gideon was thrashing a little corn.

Gideon's heart was sad that day. He had brought his corn to a place where he hoped he could hide it from the Midianites; and no doubt he was working as quietly as he could, lest any of them should hear him.

Presently he looked up and saw the angel, who said to him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

Gideon never expected to be called a mighty man of valour at that moment when he was hiding from the Midianites. It was as if the angel had said, Thou brave soldier.





GIDEON THRASHING CORN.

He replied, O sir! if the Lord be with us, why has all this happened to us? and where are all his miracles that our fathers told us about, that happened when he brought the people out of Egypt? Now the Lord has forsaken us, and has given us up to the Midianites.

The angel said, You shall save Israel from the Midianites.

Gideon answered, O sir! how shall I save Israel from the Midianites? My family is poor, and I am the least in my father's house.

The angel assured him that God would be with him, and that he should overcome the Midianites.

Then Gideon went and prepared a kid and some bread, and brought it to the stranger; for he knew not that he had been talking to an angel of God.

The angel said, Lay down the flesh and the bread upon this rock.

When Gideon did so, the angel touched them with a staff that was in his hand, and fire rose up out of the rock and consumed them. Then the angel departed out of Gideon's sight.

Gideon knew now that it was an angel who had spoken to him, and he was afraid, because he had seen an angel of God face to face. But God said to him, Peace be unto you ; fear not.

Now in a field belonging to Gideon's father there was an altar where the people worshipped the false god Baal. Beside the altar there was a great wooden image\* before which they bowed down.

That night God desired Gideon to break the altar and cut down the image. With the wood of the image he was to make a fire, and offer a burnt offering to the Lord.

Gideon took ten men of his servants, and went and did as God had commanded. As he knew that if his relations and his neighbours saw him they would hinder him, he did it by night.

In the morning, when the people of that place saw what had been done, they were very angry, and soon they found out who had done it. They went to the house of Gideon's father, and cried furiously, Bring out your son that we may kill him ; for he has thrown down the altar of Baal, and cut down the image that was by it.

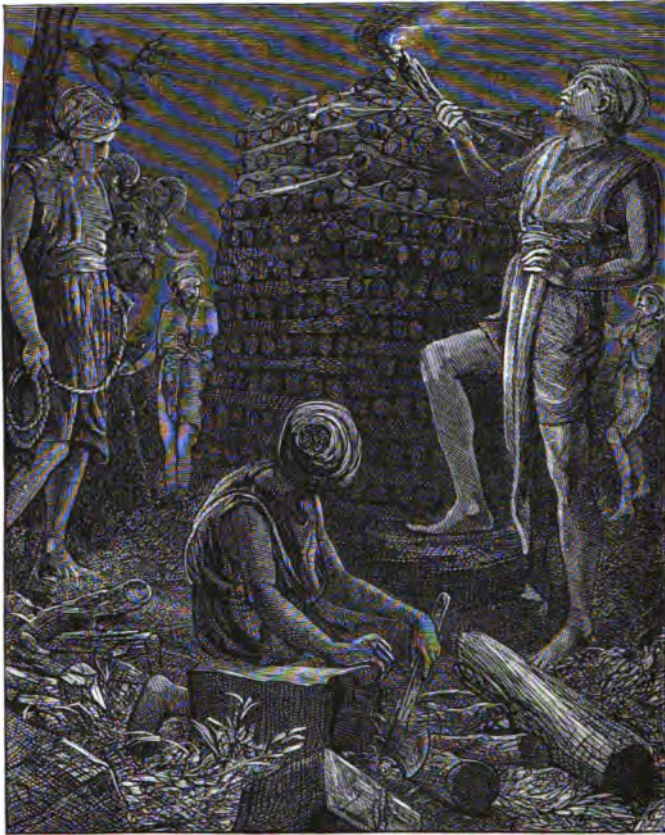
But Gideon's father answered them, Will you take Baal's part ? Does he want you to save him ? If he is a god, let him speak for himself, seeing that some one has thrown down his altar.

After this the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he called together all the men that lived near, and sent messengers to all the towns of the Israelites to call the men to him to be soldiers.

Then Gideon asked God for some sign by which he might know that he had really sent him to drive away the Midianites. For Gideon, you know, had not seen the wonders and the great victories of the old times ; he had only been told of them.

This was the sign that he asked, and God gave it to him : he spread a

\* See "Speaker's Commentary" on Judges vi. 25 ; Deut. vii. 5.



GIDEON'S ALTAR.

fleece of wool on the ground at night. In the morning the fleece was wet with dew, though all the ground about it was quite dry. Again the next night the fleece was dry, while the ground was wet with dew.

From all the places he had sent messengers to, men came to Gideon. When they were all come together he drew them up on the side of a hill,—an army of many thousand men, with Gideon for their leader.

Below in the valley lay the great army of the Midianites, with their tents and their camels covering the ground as far as the Israelites could see.

Gideon was no doubt proud of the large army he had brought together. But God said to him, You have too many soldiers. If I give the victory to this army of yours, then they will boast, and say, We have saved ourselves from our enemies. They will not learn that it is the Lord who must give them the victory. Now, therefore, give orders that every man who is afraid of the Midianites must return at once to his home.



GIDEON'S ARMY DRINKING AT THE BROOK.

Gideon gave this order, and two out of every three men left him and returned to their homes.

Again the Lord spoke to him, and said, Bring the men that have stayed with you to the water to drink, and every one who drinks water out of his hand, set on one side, and those who stoop down and put their lips to the water, set on the other side.

Gideon therefore brought them to the water. And three hundred men took up a little water in their hands and drank as they marched along, while all the rest went down on their knees to drink.

And God said, By these three hundred men will I give you the victory.

The other men returned to their tents; but Gideon and his three hundred stayed together in a place from which they could see the Midianites.

At night God told Gideon to go down to the camp of the Midianites and hear what they were saying. He and his servant therefore went down to the edge of the camp, where the armed men were placed on guard. And they heard one of the men say to his companion, I dreamt that a cake of barley-bread rolled into our camp, and it struck a tent and threw it down.

His companion replied, This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon. God has given our army into his hand.

When Gideon heard this, he thanked God. Returning to his men, he said, Arise; for the Lord has given the Midianites into your hand.

He made every one of his three hundred men take a trumpet in one hand, and in the other an earthen pitcher, with a lighted lamp inside it. Then they went down quietly to the camp of the Midianites. And at midnight they were drawn up along the edge of the camp.

It was dark, and the lamps in their hands gave no light, because they were concealed in pitchers.

Then Gideon and all his men blew with their trumpets, and broke the pitchers, so that the lights blazed out suddenly; and they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.

The Midianites were startled from their sleep by the blast of the three hundred trumpets and the sudden blaze of light. They thought a great army was upon them, and they fled hastily. As they fled they killed many of their own men, for they thought the enemy was pursuing them. In the darkness and confusion they could not tell friend from foe. But Gideon and his men were just standing still blowing the trumpets.

The Midianites fled towards the river Jordan. And all the men of Israel





GIDEON'S ATTACK ON THE MIDIANITES.

came out from their homes and pursued them, and killed many of them, and drove the rest away back to their own land.

After that the Israelites dwelt in quietness for forty years in the days of Gideon.

## VII.

### S A M S O N .



**A**FTER the time of Gideon the children of Israel fell again many times into bad ways, and turned to worship idols ; and as often as they did so they got into trouble.

Perhaps you want to know why the hearts of the Israelites turned to those false gods so often.

I think it must have been because our Father in heaven requires his children to be honest and true, and to be just and kind to one another ; and when they disobey him he punishes them. A great many of the Israelites did not want to be good ; and when they saw the heathen people worshipping gods who, they said, never asked any one to be good, but only wanted plenty of sacrifices to please them, they thought it would be much easier to serve such gods as these.

They were like foolish children, who sometimes think that if they could get away from their parents, who teach them to be good, and who reprove and punish them when they are naughty, and go to some one who would let them have their own way, and never force them to learn anything or to do anything they did not like, they would be much happier and better off.

You know what a foolish thought that is. And the Israelites were just as foolish, for there are no such gods at all as those which the heathen people worshipped. Our Father in heaven is the only living and true God. We cannot get away out of his sight or his love, neither can we escape his hand if he choose to punish us ; and some day all men will know this and confess it.

After the children of Israel had sinned many times in this way, they began to be sorely troubled by a people called the Philistines.

You will often hear of these Philistines now, for the Israelites were troubled by them more or less for many years.

They were the children of some of the people who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came into it, and they still kept possession of one part of the country, where they had several towns of their own. They were a large, strong people, and good soldiers. They used to come out of their own towns and rob the Israelites of their corn and cattle, or make them pay money to them; and they took possession of some of the Israelites' towns altogether, for God allowed them to overcome the disobedient Israelites.

You must not suppose, because a great many of the children of Israel turned away after pretended gods and worshipped idols, that *all* of them ever did so. In the very worst times there were some people who worshipped God and obeyed him; but the wicked people brought trouble not only on themselves but on their neighbours, just as wicked people do still.

While bad and good people are living together, as they do in this world, such things must often happen; yet God knows how to comfort his obedient children, and I am quite sure he did comfort them then, through all the troubles of those old times, just as he comforts them now.

At the time the Israelites were robbed and oppressed by the Philistines, there were among them a man and his wife who worshipped God and prayed to him.\* They had no child.

One day an angel was sent to tell them that they should soon have a son; that their son should be God's servant from his youth; and that he should begin to overcome the Philistines.

In due time this boy was born, and he was called Samson. From the time he was a baby his parents gave him to God, to be his servant.

Now, whenever one of the children of Israel was given to God in this way, he was called a "Nazarite;" and there were certain signs by which a Nazarite was known from other people. One sign was that he did not drink

\* Judges xiii. 8.



wine or any strong drink ; another was that his hair was not cut, but was left as long as it would grow.

Samson was a Nazarite, so he drank no wine, and his hair was never cut. And God blessed him as he grew ; and when he was grown the Spirit of God gave him a very wonderful strength. He was so strong that when people now see a very strong man they sometimes say he is a Samson.

Once when Samson was on a journey he met a fierce lion, and though he had no weapon in his hand, he laid hold of the lion and killed him as easily as another man would have killed a kid.

Samson was made a judge. He had several quarrels with the Philistines, for they treated him very badly indeed ; and though we are not told that he ever led out an army against them, yet he more than once killed many of them with his own hand. By-and-by they grew very much afraid of him. They considered him their greatest enemy ; and once, when he had done them a great deal of mischief, they sent an army to the place where he was staying, to make him a prisoner.

The people of the place were frightened when they saw this army ; but the Philistines said, We want no one but Samson. If you give him up to us, we will do you no harm.

These people were not very brave. They thought it safer to give their friend Samson up to his enemies than to go to war with the Philistines, even with such a brave strong judge to lead them, and they said to him, Don't you know that the Philistines are our masters now ? Why have you made them angry with us ? We are come to bind you and give you up to them.

Samson said, Promise me that you will not kill me yourselves ; and when they had promised, he allowed them to bind his arms down to his body with new ropes, and to bring him to the Philistines.

When these enemies saw the man whom they had feared so much thus bound and helpless, they shouted. Then Samson's great strength came upon him, and he broke the new cords with which he was bound as easily as you would break a piece of thread that you had scorched in the flame of a candle. Taking up the jaw-bone of an ass which was lying on the ground, with it he killed a thousand men of the Philistines.

One night after that, the Philistines heard that Samson was in one of their cities; so they shut the gates of the city, and set a number of men to catch him in the morning when he should try to leave the city. But Samson rose at midnight, and pulling up the city gates, posts and all, carried them away on his shoulders.

Strong as Samson was, there is a great deal that is very sad in his history.

He did not worship idols—indeed, I think he hated them; and when he was in trouble he used to call on God to help him, and God did help him too. But his history is not so pleasant to read as is that of persons who loved and served God with all their hearts. He seems to have taken pleasure in the company of people who were not good, and that brought him into trouble more than once.

He married a woman who was not good at all; and though he loved her, she was cruel and treacherous to him, for her heart was bad.

The lords of the Philistines said to this woman, We will give you ever so much money if you find out for us what it is that makes Samson so strong. They thought that if they knew this secret they could soon find some way of overcoming him.

Delilah was willing to give Samson up to his enemies if they paid her well for it, so she asked Samson what it was that made him so strong.

At first he would not tell her; so she cried, and said that if he kept secrets from her he did not love her.

Samson could not bear to see her cry, for he did love her really; so he said to her, No razor has ever touched my head, for I am a Nazarite. If my hair were shaved off, then I should cease to be a Nazarite, and I should be no stronger than any other man.

Delilah knew now that Samson had really told her his secret; so she sent for the lords of the Philistines, and they came with the money in their hands to give her. When he was fast asleep she got a man to come and shave off his long hair, which you know was the sign of a Nazarite.

Then she cried, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! And he rose up, thinking he could overcome them as easily as ever; but his great strength was gone. The Philistines, therefore, took him, and bound him with fetters

of brass; and they put out his eyes, and set him to turn a mill in their prison-house.

One day the lords of the Philistines came together to offer sacrifices to their god Dagon, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.

In the midst of their feasting and merry-making they had Samson brought into their idol's house, that they might mock him and make sport

of him. So they mocked at Samson, and praised their god Dagon.

The house was full of people inside, and there were also a great number on the roof.

Samson was set between the pillars which supported the roof. And he prayed to God to restore to him his great strength, that he might once more slay the enemies of his people.

Then he took hold of the two middle pillars, and bowed himself with all his might, so that the pillars broke and the house fell; and Samson and all the lords of the Philistines

were killed in the fall of it. So Samson killed more Philistines at the time of his death than he had ever done in his life.



SAMSON'S DEATH.

As I said before, his history is a sad one.

Though he was strong and brave, yet he was not so good and noble as many other people we read about.

I daresay he would have done more good for the Israelites, only that in his time they seem to have been very cowardly. They were not yet ready to put away all their idols, and to go out to battle against their enemies, trusting in God to save them.

## VIII.

### SAMUEL.



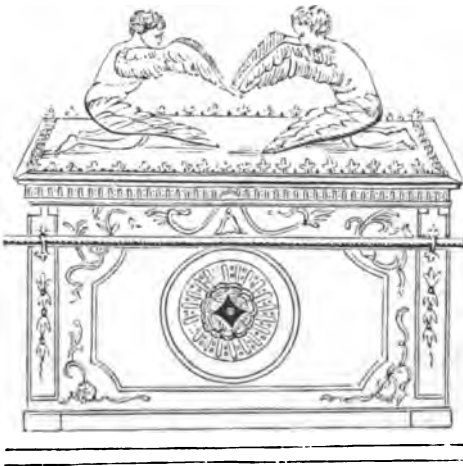
THE good people among the children of Israel used to come very often to a place called Shiloh to worship God there.

It was at Shiloh all those holy things were kept that were used in the public worship of God. The ark of God was there.

That was a chest covered with gold, in which had been placed long before a copy of the laws which God had given Moses, some of the manna the people used to eat in the wilderness, and some other very precious things.

At certain times the high priest used to worship God in a very solemn manner in the place where the ark was kept.

In the same place there were an altar made of brass, a small altar covered with gold, and many beautiful golden vessels, all of which had been made according to directions given by God to Moses when the children of Israel were in the wilderness.



THE ARK.

As yet there had been no house built to contain these things. They

were kept in a tent hung inside with very beautiful curtains, and covered on the outside with skins of animals.

They were all under the care of the high priest, and certain other priests were chosen to help him. No one who was not a priest might touch these things, for they were sacred. Everything that was done with them had to be done very solemnly, and the place where they were kept was called "holy."

During the time I have been telling you about there was a high priest called Eli. He was a good man, but his sons were bad. He had not brought them up well, and when he was old they were a great trouble to him.

They did not worship idols, but what they did was almost worse; for while they were doing the work of priests in the holy place, they were in their hearts and in their ways just like the people who worshipped idols. They were doing those things that God hates; and when their father reproved them they did not heed his words.

One day a good woman who loved God brought her little boy to Shiloh. She had given her child to God, and she wished him to be brought up at Shiloh, under the high priest's care, that he might wait upon the priests when they offered sacrifices in the holy place.

He was very young when she brought him there, and she used to come to see him every year, and take him a little coat which she had made for him.

This child's name was Samuel.

Young Samuel grew up in Shiloh, waiting upon Eli in the holy place—a sweet boy, loved by every one who saw him. And God called him to be his servant and his prophet.

One night, after Samuel had lain down in his bed, he heard a voice calling "Samuel!"

He got up and went to Eli, and said, I am here. You called me.



HIGH PRIEST.

Eli answered, I did not call you. Lie down again.

When he had lain down he again heard the voice call "Samuel!"



"SAMUEL! SAMUEL!"

Again he went to Eli, and said, Here I am; for now you did call me.

But Eli said, I did not call you, my son. Lie down again.

A third time Samuel heard that call. And when he went to Eli the third time, Eli knew that God had called Samuel, so he said to him, Go lie down; and if he calls you again you shall say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.

Samuel obeyed and went and lay down. And God called as before, Samuel! Samuel!

This time Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

Then the Lord told Samuel that because Eli's sons were wicked, and their father did not hinder their bad ways, therefore he was about to send on Eli's family the terrible punishments he had before threatened it with: the two sons of Eli should die in one day, and God would choose a man to be high priest after him who was neither child nor grandchild of his.

This was indeed a sad thing for poor Eli to hear. Samuel was unwilling to grieve the old man by telling him, so he lay still until the morning. The next day he said nothing about the matter until Eli asked him what the Lord had said to him.

Then Samuel told him. And Eli answered, It is the Lord; let him do what he thinks good.

From this time Samuel was a prophet. He spoke the words of God to the people, and sometimes God told him what was going to take place. And when things came to pass just as Samuel had said, then all the children of Israel knew that he was God's prophet, and they honoured him and gave heed to his words.

Eli's two sons were killed in a battle with the Philistines.

That was a very sad day for the Israelites. They had brought the ark of God from Shiloh into the field of battle; for they thought that if they had with them that holy ark, it would certainly give them the victory over their enemies.

This was not much better than worshipping idols. It was as if they thought the ark was God, or that God must always be where the ark was.

What God taught them by all his prophets was that he is with people everywhere whose hearts are turned towards him and who desire to obey him. It is this that he wants, and not that people should honour him with the lips only.

A great many of the Israelites were killed in that battle; and the ark was taken by the Philistines, who carried it away and put it in the house of their idol.

Old Eli that day was sitting in Shiloh on a seat by the wayside, waiting, with a sad heart, for news of the battle. And a messenger came and told him all that had happened.

When he heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell backwards from his seat, and his neck was broken, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy.

He had been judge as well as high priest, and after his death Samuel became judge.

The Philistines did not keep the ark very long. Great plagues came upon every place they brought it to, so they soon resolved to send it back; and this is the way they sent it. They put it upon a new cart, and they got two milch cows which had never been put to any work. They took their calves away from them, and tied the cows to the new cart, but the calves they shut up at home.



Then they watched to see what the cows would do when they were left to themselves. And the cows did not turn back to the place where their calves were shut up; they went straight along the way to the nearest city of the Israelites, lowing as they went, and they never stopped till they came to the Israelites' land.

The Israelites were glad when they saw the ark brought back to them in this wonderful way. It was set up in one of their towns, though not again in Shiloh.

Samuel was a good judge. He made the people put away all the idols that were among them. When at last this had been done, he gathered the people together at Mizpeh, and there he prayed to God for them, that he would now save his people from the Philistines, who had oppressed and troubled them so long.

The Philistines heard that the Israelites were gathered together at Mizpeh, and came up to fight with them. Then the people said to Samuel, Cease not to pray to the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

Samuel therefore cried to God for Israel; and God heard him, and sent a great thunder, which threw the Philistines into confusion. The Israelites then drove them back into their own cities, and they came no more into the Israelites' country all the days of Samuel.

Samuel lived for many years, a prophet to speak God's words to the children of Israel, and also to be their judge. They were better and happier in his time than they had been since Joshua's days.

Wise and good rulers and teachers can do people a great deal of good; and Samuel, you know, was both a ruler and a teacher.

## IX.

### S A U L.



WHEN Samuel was old he made his sons judges to help him. They were not like him ; for Samuel loved God, and was just, but his sons loved money, and took bribes.

I hope you do not know what "to take bribes" means, for really it is something so bad I hardly like to tell you.

A bribe is a present given secretly to some one to pay him for doing something unfair. If two persons had a dispute, and they came to one of these unjust judges to decide it, instead of finding out who was in the right and deciding for him, the bad judge would decide for the man who had sent him a present, and care nothing at all about who was in the right ; and if a person who broke the laws was only rich enough to send the judge a large bribe, these wicked judges would let him off.

When a ruler takes bribes everything goes wrong ; and God is very angry both with people who take them and with people who offer them.

The Israelites soon got tired of the ways of Samuel's sons, and the chief men came to Samuel and said, You are old now, and your sons are not good men like you. Set a king over us, that he may rule us, and that he may lead us out to battle, like the kings of all the other nations.

Samuel was not pleased when they said this to him, but he gave them no answer until he had first asked God what he should do about it.

And God said, You shall pay attention to their words ; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. You shall tell them, therefore, what it will be to have a king over them.

Samuel then told the people that if they had a king he would take the best of everything in the country for himself; he would take the finest young men and women to be his servants, and take the best fields and gardens for his own, and every one would have to give a portion of his goods in order that the king might live in great splendour.

But the people answered, For all that, let us have a king like other nations; and our king shall rule us, and go out before us to battle.

Then God said to Samuel, Do as they say,—give them a king.

Samuel now told the people to return to their homes until he should find the man whom God should choose to be their king.

Soon after this God told Samuel that on the following day he should see the man who was to be king.

The next day a very tall and handsome young man came to Samuel's house. His name was Saul, and he had come a long way from his home in search of some asses which had strayed.

And God said to Samuel, There is the young man I told you of. He shall reign over my people Israel.

Samuel therefore went out to Saul and said to him, The asses that you are seeking have been found.

Saul knew that a prophet was speaking to him; for though he had come to ask about the asses, he had not mentioned them before Samuel spoke.

Saul stayed all that night with Samuel. They had much talk alone together; and in the morning, when Saul set out to return home, Samuel went with him a little way, and before he parted from him he poured oil upon his head.

This was called "anointing;" and it was a sign that Saul had been chosen to fill some high and honourable place.

When Samuel had thus anointed Saul, he kissed him, and said, It is because the Lord has anointed you to be the leader of his people. And when he had given him directions for his journey, he sent him on his way.

Saul was very much astonished at what Samuel had told him. His family were not very remarkable people, and he had certainly never ex-

pected to be a king. I think he was rather frightened at the thought of it; but he said nothing about it to his relations.

Soon after this Samuel called all the chief men of the people together to Mizpeh, that a king might be chosen by lot from among them.

The Israelites used often to decide very important things by drawing lots. They used to pray to God to make the lot fall to the right person, and then they were satisfied that God had chosen the person to whom it fell.

Saul knew that the lot would fall to him, and he hid himself. He felt afraid of this great honour that was about to be given to him. When therefore the lot fell to him the people had to go and seek him; and they brought him out from his hiding-place—a splendid young man, head and shoulders above the men who stood about him.

And Samuel said, You see the king whom the Lord has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people. And the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

After this Saul returned to his home, and a band of men went with him. But there were others who said, How shall this man save us? and they would not have him for their king. For a while, therefore, Saul lived in his father's house, and he ploughed the fields and attended to his business just as he had done before.

Saul one day heard that a certain town was in great danger of being taken and destroyed by the king of Ammon. Calling all the men to come and be soldiers, he marched off to that town and saved it, and drove away the king of Ammon and his army.

Then the people said, Saul shall be our king! Where are the men who said they would not have him? We will put those men to death.

But Saul said, I will have no one put to death this day, since God has saved us from our enemies.

Again Samuel gathered the people together, and they made Saul king amid great rejoicings.

Before the people returned to their homes Samuel spoke many solemn words to them. He told them they had acted ungratefully in asking to have a king over them when the Lord God himself was their King. Never-

theless God had now given them a king, and they must honour and obey him. If the king and the people kept God's laws, then they should be blessed ; but if they did wickedly, then both they and their king should fall into trouble. And Samuel said, I will not cease to pray for you, and to teach you the good and the right way. But in future Saul must judge them, for he was now their king.

It would be very pleasant if I could go on telling you good things about Saul ; but this I cannot do.

During part of his reign the people were again troubled by the Philistines, and he had many victories over them, as well as over other enemies. But after a time he wilfully disobeyed some of God's commands.

Then God sent Samuel to him to rebuke him, and to tell him that the kingdom should be taken away from him and given to a man who was better than he.

It grieved Samuel deeply to have to do this, and he cried to God all that night.

In the morning he went to Saul ; and when he found how the king had been disobeying God's commands, he said to him, Is God as much pleased with burnt offerings and sacrifices as with obedience to his commands ? To obey is better than sacrifice, and disobedience is as bad as to worship idols. Because you have refused the word of the Lord, he has also refused to let you continue to be king.

Samuel then turned to go away. But Saul laid hold upon his mantle, for he wanted him to stay and offer a sacrifice, and to pray for him once more ; and the mantle was torn in Saul's hand.

And Samuel said, So has God torn the kingdom away from you, and given it to one that is better than you.

However, he did turn back with Saul, for he was very sorry for him. But after that he did not come to see him any more, though he grieved for him ; for he loved the man whom he had anointed to be king, and to whom he had spoken God's words for so many years.



SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID.



X.

DAVID, THE SHEPHERD.



THE old prophet Samuel felt very sad when he thought of how King Saul had disobeyed God, and that the kingdom must be taken away from him for his disobedience.

But God said to Samuel, How long will you grieve for Saul? He is not to continue to be king. Take with you oil, and go to the house of Jesse at Bethlehem; for I have chosen a king from among his sons.

Samuel therefore went to Bethlehem. There he offered a sacrifice to God, and he sent for Jesse and his sons to come to the sacrifice.

When he looked at Jesse's eldest son, who was a tall and handsome young man, he thought, Surely this is the man whom God has chosen to be king. But God answered his thoughts, and said to him—into his mind—I have not chosen him. The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

Seven young men, the sons of Jesse, passed before Samuel; but he knew that he had not yet seen the chosen one.

Then he said to Jesse, Are all your sons here?

Jesse answered, You have not seen my youngest son; he is keeping the sheep.

Samuel said, Send and fetch him.

Jesse therefore sent for David, his youngest son, and brought him in to Samuel,—a beautiful young lad, with a fresh face and a bright colour.

And God said to Samuel, Rise, anoint him; for this is he.



Then Samuel poured oil upon the head of David as he stood in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of God came upon David from that day forward.

Samuel returned to his house, and David went to tend his sheep as before,—a brave, noble lad, with his mind full of beautiful and happy thoughts. He feared nothing, not even the fierce wild beasts that prowled about his flock in the lonely pastures, for he knew that God was there.

He used to make beautiful songs, and the Spirit of God taught him what to say in them.\*

There is one song of his that I think you have often heard. It begins, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." I think it is very likely he made that song when he was tending his sheep; and perhaps he sang it out in those lonely places, and played upon his harp as he sang, for David played upon the harp very sweetly.

In the meantime King Saul in his fine house grew gloomy and sad. He was constantly fearful of something, and yet he knew not what it was he feared. And the people who were about him said, Let us find a man who can play well upon the harp, and bring him here to play before you, and the music will do you good.

David was sent for, to play the harp before the king. He left his sheep and came to Saul's house; and when that gloomy, terrified mood came upon the king, David played sweet music upon his harp, and the king was refreshed and was well for that time. After a while David went back to his sheep again.

After this the Philistines gathered a great army to come and fight the Israelites once more. Saul also gathered an army with which to meet them.

When the two armies were come near each other, Saul's soldiers were drawn up on the side of a hill, and the Philistines were drawn up on the side of another hill facing them, and there was a valley between.

Now there was in the Philistine army a huge man—a giant—whose name was Goliath. He had a helmet of brass on his head, and he was

\* 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.



DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL





DAVID AS A SHEPHERD.

covered all over with armour made of brass; he had also a spear and a sword, too large and heavy for any one but himself to carry, and a man carrying a shield went before him.



This giant stepped out in front of the Philistine army and shouted, so that all Saul's men could hear, Why do you bring out your army to fight with us? Choose one man from your army, and let him fight with me alone. If he kill me, then we shall be your servants; but if I overcome him and kill him, then you shall serve us.

For many days the giant defied the Israelites in these words; and they were distressed and afraid, for they knew there was not a man among them half so strong as Goliath the Philistine.

The three eldest brothers of David were in Saul's army, but he had been left at home with the sheep.

One day his father sent him to see how his brothers did, and to carry them a present of parched corn and bread. So David came to the camp, and as he was talking with his brothers, Goliath stepped out in front of the



GOLIATH DEFFING THE ISRAELITES.

army on the hill opposite, and shouted his fierce, proud words.

David saw how the men of Israel feared when they heard Goliath; and he said to the men who stood near him, What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine and takes away this disgrace from Israel? for who is this heathen Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?

The men answered, The king will reward that man with great honours.

When David's eldest brother heard him talking in this way, he got cross,

and told him that he had no business coming there to see the two armies; he ought to have stayed at home with his sheep. But some of the men brought David to Saul, and told what he had said about the giant.

David said to the king, Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine; I will go out and fight with him.

Saul said, You are not able; for you are but a youth, and he is a man of war from his youth.

David answered, One day, when I kept my father's sheep, there came a lion and took away a lamb out of the flock; and I went after him, and took it out of his mouth; and when he turned on me, I struck him, and killed him. Also, I once killed a bear. And this heathen Philistine shall be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of God. The Lord, who saved me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, will also save me from the hand of this Philistine.

Then Saul said, Go, and the Lord be with you. He gave David armour and a sword; but when David had tried them on he said, I cannot wear these, for I am not accustomed to them. So he put them off, and went out with his staff in his hand and a shepherd's bag at his side; he also held in his hand a sling, an instrument used to shoot small stones from.

David chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into his bag, and drew near to the huge Philistine.

When the Philistine saw who it was that was come to fight with him, he mocked at the thought of a slender lad with a staff in his hand coming to fight with a giant fully armed.

Am I a dog, he said, that you come to me with a staff? Come on; I will soon kill you.

But David answered, You come to me with a sword and a spear and a shield; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts. And all the people shall know that the Lord saves not with sword or with spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

Full of fury Goliath came on, and David ran to meet him. As he ran he put a stone into his sling, and cast it so that it struck the Philistine and sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. Then David ran

and stood upon Goliath, and took his great sword from him, and cut off his head.

When the Philistines saw that their giant soldier was dead they all fled. And the Israelites shouted and pursued them, and drove them back to their



DAVID AND GOLIATH.

own towns. But David was brought again before King Saul, with the head of Goliath in his hand.

Saul did not remember that David was the young man who had played

the harp for him. He asked him whose son he was; and when he had spoken for a while with him, he would not let him go home any more, but kept him as a captain in his army.

Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David, and they became very dear friends,—so much so that people sometimes say of friends who love each other very dearly, They are like David and Jonathan.



## XI.

### DAVID, THE SOLDIER AND KING.



DAVID acted wisely and faithfully in everything that Saul gave him to do. He was a brave soldier, as he had been a brave shepherd, and all the people were pleased with him. But Saul did not long continue to feel kindly to him.

When Saul was returning with his army after the great victory over Goliath and the Philistines, the women came to meet him out of all the towns, singing and dancing, as their custom was when they rejoiced. In their songs they praised David more than they did Saul.

This made Saul very angry. He thought, They are honouring David more than me; they will want to give him the kingdom too. And from that day he hated David, and tried to get him killed.

But David returned victorious from other battles too, and the people loved him and praised him more than ever, so that Saul could not bear the sight of him.

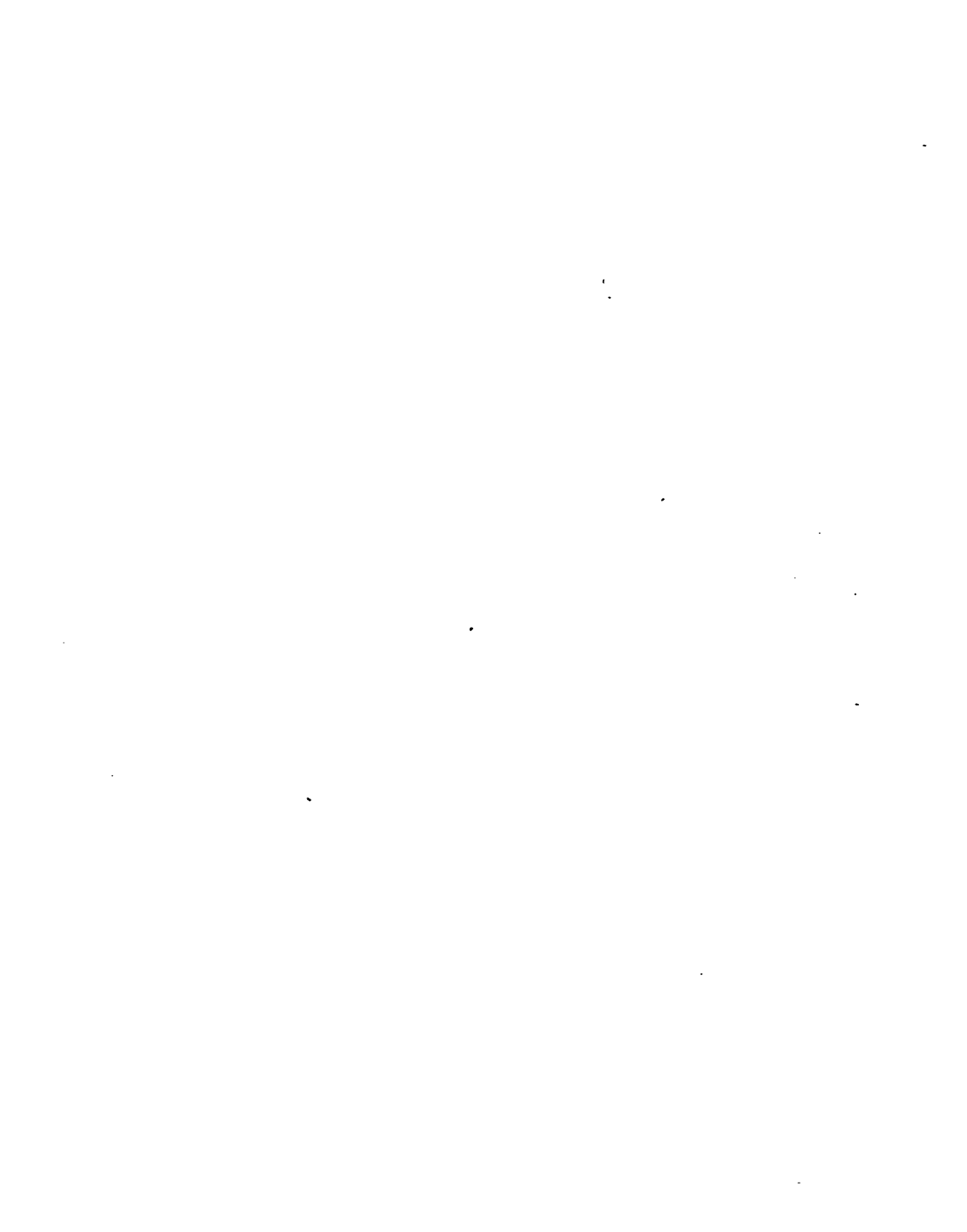
Once when David was playing the harp before him (for the gloomy, terrified mood had returned upon King Saul), twice he cast a sharp-pointed weapon called a javelin at David, thinking to kill him; but each time David slipped away and escaped.

After that David and his friend Jonathan talked together, and they made a plan that David should go away and hide himself. They sorrowfully bade each other good-bye, and kissed each other and promised to be friends always.

When Saul found that Jonathan was taking David's part, he fell into a



DAVID RETURNING FROM THE BATTLE WITH THE PHILISTINES.





THE FAREWELL MEETING OF JONATHAN AND DAVID.

rage, and said, You have chosen the son of Jesse to your own ruin ; for as long as this son of Jesse lives you will never be king.

Still Jonathan loved David, and helped him, though he knew well that what his father said was true,—that not he, but David, was chosen to be king after Saul.

I cannot tell you half the things that happened to David when he was hiding from Saul. He was hunted about from place to place, for whenever Saul heard where he was, he at once went with a band of men to take him.

Once David lived for some time in a cave, and several men came to him there, and he became their captain. They fought several battles with the enemies of the Israelites, and saved the Israelites from being robbed.

But David never would fight with Saul. He knew that some day God would give him the kingdom ; but as long as God left it to Saul, he would not raise his hand to hurt his king.

One day Saul came and lay down to sleep in a cave where David and his

men were hiding. Some of them wanted to kill him, but David would not let them.

Another time David and one of his friends walked right into the place where Saul and his men were all fast asleep. There lay Saul, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head and a cruse of water beside him.



JONATHAN PLEADING FOR DAVID.

David's friend said, Now God has given your enemy into your hand; let me kill him with his own spear.

But David said, No, he is our king; his day shall come to die, but I will not hurt the man whom God has made king. Take the spear and the cruse, and come away.

When they had got to the top of a hill opposite, David cried out to the man who had been sleeping beside

Saul, Oh, you are a brave fellow! How well you have watched by your master the king! See where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head!

When Saul heard this he cried, Is that your voice, my son David?

David answered, It is my voice, O king. Why does my lord thus follow after his servant? What have I done?

Then said Saul, I have sinned; I have been a fool. Return, my son David; for I will not harm you any more.

David now called on one of Saul's men to come and fetch the king's



DAVID SHOWING THE KING'S SPEAR AND CRUSE.

spear. And Saul said, God bless you, my son David; you shall do great things, and shall overcome.

David therefore went on his way, and Saul returned, and did not pursue after him any more.

David and his men, however, continued to wander about for a while longer, often fighting battles with those robbers who used to disturb the land.

One day a messenger came and told him that Saul and his three sons



had been killed in a battle with the Philistines, and that many of the Israelites had been again driven from their homes by those fierce enemies.

David and his men mourned when they heard this, and he made a sad but very beautiful song of lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

Afterwards David was made king, for the people loved him. And God gave him the victory over many enemies, and he beat the Philistines so completely that after his time they never troubled the land again. He also enlarged the kingdom a good deal, for he added to it many places that the Israelites had never possessed before.

He had an army of strong, brave men, all good soldiers like himself; and the general over all the army was a man called Joab.

Joab did many brave acts, and he was true and faithful to King David. Yet he was a fierce, blood-thirsty man; but David was not blood-thirsty, though he had fought many battles.

King David made his home at Jerusalem, which from that time became the chief city in the land.

A very beautiful house was built there for the king; and David desired also to build there a house in which to place the ark of God and all those things which were used in worship. But God sent a prophet to tell him that he should not build that house, because he was a man of war; but his son, who was to be king after him, should build it, for God would give David's son rest from his enemies, and he should be a man of peace.

This shows us that peace is a better thing than war; and when God's time comes for peace, it is the greatest blessing he can give to men. Nevertheless in this wicked world some of God's most faithful servants have had to be warriors. And though David prospered in all that he did, he had not an easy or a quiet life; for many years he was always at war.

## XII.

### ABSALOM.



ONCE David did a very cruel and bad act. He thought that no one knew what he had done; but God knew it, and sent a prophet to rebuke him. When David heard the words of the prophet, he felt how bad he had been, and he was very, very sorry.

You may read in the Bible the sad but beautiful words in which he asked God to forgive him, and to take away the wickedness out of him.

God did forgive him; nevertheless the prophet told him that because of his sin he should have trouble from his own family. And so it came to pass that the sorest trouble David ever had was caused by the wicked conduct of his own son Absalom.

Absalom was, I think, the most undutiful son and almost the worst young man I ever heard of.

He was very handsome—so handsome that people delighted to look at him. Besides that, he could have, when he chose, such kind, pleasant manners that he made people love him.

King David dearly loved his handsome son, and he was wonderfully kind and forgiving to him. Even the rough old soldier Joab used to take his part when he had got himself into trouble with his bad ways.

But though he could make people love him, Absalom was really heartless and cruel.

Absalom was not satisfied with being the dearly-loved son of a great king; he wanted to be greater than any of his brothers, and to be the finest



lord in the land, as he was really the handsomest man in it. So he got splendid horses and chariots, and when he went out to drive he had fifty men running before him.

This seems foolish enough, but soon a more wicked thought came to him,—he would get the people to make him king instead of his father. So he set himself to please them with his deceitful manners.

He used to go early in the morning and stand by a gate through which those people passed in who came to the king for judgment; for when people had a dispute, they used to come to the king to decide the matter, and he had to ask questions and find out all about it, and then say who was in the right. If the question was about money or goods, he would decide how much each person ought to have.

A good king like David would take great pains to settle everything fairly. As this was often a difficult thing to do, people sometimes had to wait a good while before their turn came to be attended to.

Absalom, who really did not care a bit about justice or fairness, used to stand by the gate, as I told you, and when he saw any one going in, he would stop him and talk to him in a very civil manner, and soon he would be told all about the matter in dispute. Then he would say, Certainly it is you who are in the right, but the king has not set any one to attend to you. How I wish he would make me a judge, so that any one who had a complaint to make might come to me, and I would do him justice. And when any one came to make a low bow before Absalom because he was the king's son, Absalom took him by the hand and kissed him, as if he were his dearest friend. Soon many of the people were ready to do anything for the beautiful, brave-looking prince who spoke such pleasant words to them.

You see that saying civil things just to please people is quite a different thing from being really kind.

When Absalom had quite won the hearts of the people, he asked his father's leave to go for a while to Hebron; and David said, Go in peace.

Absalom had already sent to his friends in every part of the country a message, saying, When you hear the sound of a trumpet, then say, Absalom

is king ; he is reigning in Hebron. So when this signal was given, every one who wished to make him king came to him at Hebron.

And it was told David, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom ; they are going to make him king.



ABSALOM IN ARMS AGAINST DAVID.

When David heard this, he did not act like the brave warrior that he was at other times. He did not blow a trumpet and call his brave men together to go out against Absalom's army. He said to his servants, Let us

get away out of Jerusalem, or Absalom will come and fight against the city, and there will be bloodshed.

I think his heart was broken by the conduct of the son to whom he had been so kind and forgiving. He had no heart to fight with the rebels.

David and his servants went hastily out of Jerusalem, and many men who were true to their king went with him. As they went up the hill out of Jerusalem, David covered his head and wept; and all the people who went with him wept also.

The king now began to find out how much his people really loved him; for as he passed along, all the people who lived about Jerusalem mourned and wept for him, and many came with offers of help, and they brought food and drink for the men who were with him. But some persons behaved very badly.

In the meantime the rebels came into Jerusalem, and they did all sorts of wicked things there; and Absalom took possession of his father's palace, and called himself king.

Then the man who had helped him to make all his wicked plans said, Let me now take some men and follow after David and his friends, and overtake them while they are weak and weary, so that they will not be able to fight; and they will run away, and I will kill David only. When he is dead the people will all turn to you, and the kingdom shall be yours without war.

This saying pleased Absalom; he thought the plan a very good one.

There was another man there, however, who was true to David, though Absalom did not know it. He said, That is not a good plan. Your father's men are old, trained soldiers, and they are now fierce and angry. They will hide your father, and then fall upon our men, and kill some of them. Then the people will be afraid to help you any more, for every one knows your father is a great warrior, and his men are brave and strong. It will be foolish to go out with a few men to fight them. Let us gather a great army out of the whole country, and you shall go at the head of it; and we will surround your father and his soldiers, and kill every man of them.

Now this was really a plan to give David's men a little time to prepare;

but Absalom did not know that, and thought it a much better plan than the other.

David's friends in Jerusalem then sent to tell him what the rebels were going to do. So by the time Absalom had gathered his army, David's soldiers were ready to meet them.

They had gathered in a little town on the other side of the Jordan, and they went out to battle under the command of Joab and two other generals. They had asked David not to go to battle, for they knew the rebels would do all they could to kill the king.

David watched his little army march out of the city, and as they passed through the gate, he said, Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom. And all the soldiers heard this command. I wonder what Absalom would have thought if he could have heard it?

The two armies met in a wood. David's old soldiers soon threw the rebels into fright and confusion, so that more of them were killed by getting entangled in the wood, when they were running away, than in the actual battle.

Absalom himself fled; but as he was riding away in great haste his mule carried him under a great oak tree, and his head got entangled in the boughs. The mule, however, still went on, and Absalom was left hanging from the tree.

A man who saw him there told Joab. Why did you not kill him? said Joab. I would have rewarded you.

The man answered, I would not lay a hand upon the king's son for anything you could give me; for I heard the king say, Let no one touch the young man Absalom.

But Joab took three arrows in his hand, and went and thrust them through Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And Joab's servants came and killed him; and they put his body into a pit that was in the wood, and piled a great heap of stones on it.

Then Joab blew a trumpet to call back his soldiers from pursuing the beaten rebels; for he knew they would come back to King David, now that the beautiful young prince at whose bidding they had been ready to do any wickedness was lying mangled and dead beneath a heap of stones.



ABSALOM CAUGHT IN THE OAK.

King David was sitting in the gate of the city, waiting for news of the battle. There was a watchman on the tower above looking out over the country to see if there was any messenger coming; and this man cried, I see a man running alone.

If he is alone, said David, he is a messenger.

The watchman looked again, and said, There is another man running alone. He also brings news, said David.

The first messenger came and bowed down before the king, and said, All is well. Blessed be the Lord your God, who has given up the men that fought against the king.

David said, Is the young man Absalom safe?

The messenger answered, When Joab sent me, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

Soon the other messenger came up, and cried, Tidings, my lord the king! God has this day punished all who fought against you.

Again David asked, Is the young man Absalom safe?

The messenger answered, May all the enemies of the king be as that young man is!

Then David knew that his wicked son was dead, and his heart was grieved. He went up to his chamber weeping. As he went he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

When Joab and all the army heard how the king was grieved for his son, their joy was turned into mourning. Instead of marching all together into the town, with gay music and colours flying, as victorious armies do, they stole in like people who had run away in a battle; for they could not play gay music when their king, whom they loved so much, abode in his chamber, covering his face, and wailing, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!

Why was David so much grieved at the death of this wicked rebel—this son who had never been anything but a trouble to him, and had at last plotted to kill his father that he might make himself king?

Only because God has put such tender love into the hearts of parents that they will not turn against even the most thankless and wicked children. And though a father or a mother cannot keep a wicked son from destroying himself, as you see even King David could not save Absalom, yet when every one else is saying, He has got what he deserved, the parents mourn and grieve, and, if it were possible, they would die instead of their child.

This teaches us something of what is in the heart of our Father who is in heaven, and of our Saviour Jesus who died for us. Yet if we are disobedient, and rebel against him, we too must perish, like Absalom.

### XIII.

## SOLOMON.



WHEN David died, Solomon his son became king. God had promised David that the king who reigned in Jerusalem should always be one of his family.

I daresay some of you remember that when Jesus was on earth people sometimes called him "the Son of David." He was one of David's family, just as David was one of Abraham's family.

There is a great deal in the Bible about a son of David who shall have a happy and glorious kingdom. Jesus is that Son of David. Some day he will reign, not over David's kingdom only, but over all the kingdoms of this earth.

In Solomon's time the land had peace and quietness. He had no need to fight battles, for David had overcome all his enemies.

The people now sowed their seed and gathered in their corn and fruit in safety, for they had no fear of those fierce robbers that used to trouble the land; every one now lived quietly in his own home, for there was no need to gather armies and go out to war.

God had promised David that his son should be a "man of rest."

Solomon was young when he became king. He knew but little of the world and of people's ways; therefore it was hard for him to know how to rule well over a kingdom, and he felt this in his heart.

That shows he was sensible; had he been a foolish young man he would have thought he knew quite enough about it.

Soon after he was made king, God spoke to him in a dream by night, and said, Ask what I shall give you.

Solomon said, O Lord my God, thou hast made me king in the room of my father David: and I am like a little child; I know not how to act. Give me therefore an understanding heart, that I may know what is good and what is bad: for who is able to judge so great a people?

God was pleased that Solomon had asked, not for riches or honour or a long life, but for wisdom and knowledge to be a good king. Therefore God granted him that understanding heart for which he had asked, and he gave him also riches and honour.

Solomon had need of great wisdom, for, as I have told you, the king in those days was chief judge in the land, and every hard thing was brought him to decide.

One day there came before him two women, one of whom had a baby in her arms. The other woman said, My lord king, this woman and I live in the same house, and we each had a baby boy of the same age; but this woman's child died in the night, and while I was asleep she came and stole my boy, and put her dead boy into my arms. And when I awoke the child in my arms was dead; but when I looked at him I knew that he was not my child at all.

Her neighbour said, That is not true: this living child is mine, the dead child is hers.

King Solomon said, Bring me a sword. And when it was brought, he said, Cut the living child in two, and give half to the one woman and half to the other.

Then the true mother cried out, O my lord, give her the living child; oh, do not kill it!

But the other said, Let it be neither yours nor mine, but divide it.

Then said the king, The woman who would not hurt the child is the mother; give it to her.

When the people heard of this judgment they honoured the king greatly, for they saw that God had given him wisdom to do justice.

It is a great help to any one who has to govern when he understands the feelings people have in their hearts: this was part of the knowledge God had given to Solomon.





THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

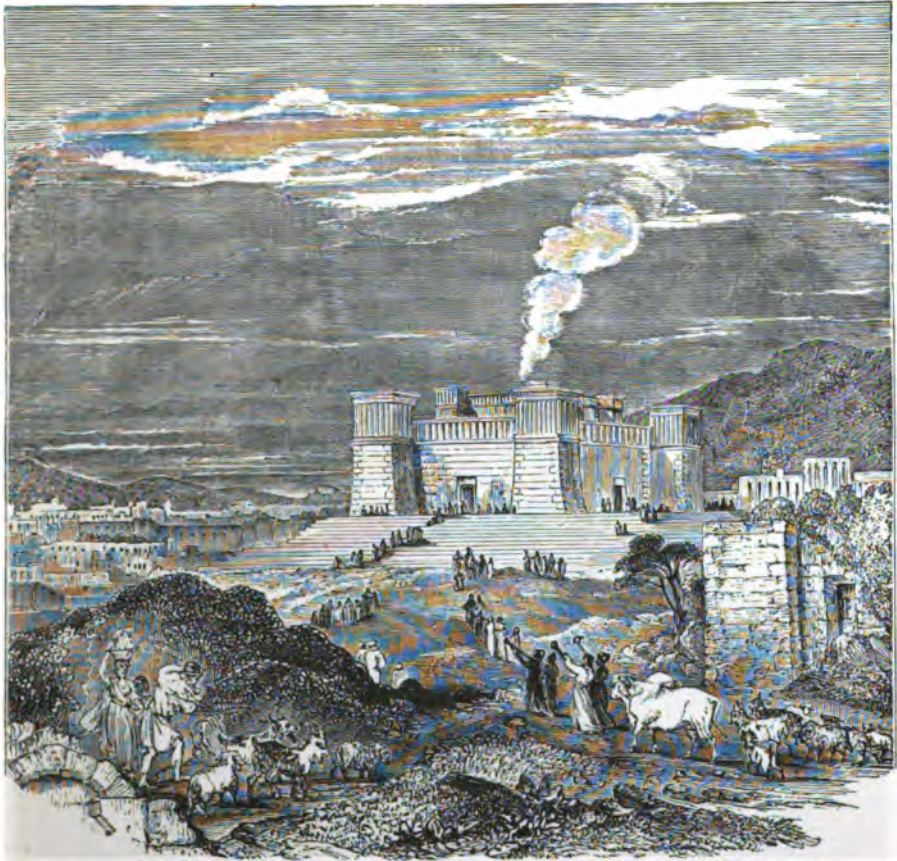
Besides that, he gave him knowledge of everything he has made. Solomon could speak wisely about trees and plants, and insects and birds and fishes.

Now the time was come to build that great house that David had wished to build—a house in which to place the ark of God and all those things which were used in worship; a house where the high priest and those other priests who helped him might worship God continually, and where all the people might come together to worship on their great feast-days.

David had often spoken about this house. His great delight was to think and plan about it.

He wished it to be a very glorious and beautiful house, and he gave Solomon a great quantity of beautiful and costly materials for the adorning of it,—gold and silver and precious stones, besides a great quantity of brass and iron and marble. He also told Solomon the fashion in which it was to be built.

Solomon got a great number of clever workmen to come and build this temple.



SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

There was no noise of chisels or hammers or saws heard at the place where the building was going on. The king had all the stones cut and prepared at the quarry, so that each stone was brought ready to lay into its place. The beams for the roof and the doors and the pillars were also prepared before they were brought there.

Inside the house the walls were all lined with costly wood, carved and overlaid with gold. The doors and ceilings were also carved and overlaid

with gold. The candlesticks and all the small vessels of the temple were made of pure gold ; and there were great baths of polished brass, and pillars of polished brass in the porch.

It took seven years to finish this beautiful temple. Everything was of the most costly material and the most beautiful workmanship that Solomon could get.

When all was finished, he called the people together ; and the priests brought the holy things into the places prepared for them.

Solomon stood in the court of the temple upon a high platform in the sight of all the people.

The singers and those who played upon instruments of music sang and praised God.

After that the king spoke to the people, and blessed them. And then he knelt down in their sight and prayed a very beautiful prayer for all the people, and for every one who should at any time come to pray in that temple.

The priests then offered sacrifices. And the king made a great feast for all the people in Jerusalem ; and they rejoiced greatly and praised God for seven days.

Afterwards the king sent them to their homes glad and happy at all they had seen and heard, and thanking God for his great goodness to all his people.

Solomon also built a splendid palace for himself, and made many other fine buildings in Jerusalem. He was very rich ; gold and silver were to be seen everywhere in Jerusalem in his days.

Great people used to come from distant countries to see the splendour of King Solomon, and also to hear his wisdom.

In a country far away in the south there was a queen who, like a great many other people great and small, used to think and wonder about many things that no one had ever been able to explain to her.

When she heard about the wisdom of Solomon, she said to herself, I will make a journey to that distant land, and tell all these thoughts to the king of the Israelites. If he is as wise as they say, he will be able to tell me what I want so much to know.



SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.



She took a great number of servants with her; and they were many, many days on their journey. They rode upon camels all the way; and they also had camels loaded with gifts for King Solomon, of gold and gems and costly spices.

When they came to Jerusalem, the queen of Sheba told Solomon the thoughts that had troubled her, and all the things she had so long been wondering about; and he answered all her questions for her.

The queen of Sheba was so much impressed by his answers, and the splendour of his house, and his servants, and his beautiful robes, and the temple he had built, that she said, When I was in my own country I heard of King Solomon's wisdom and greatness, and I could not believe all I heard; but now I know that the half was not told me. Happy are those servants of yours, who are with you always, and who hear your wisdom.

Perhaps you would like to know what it was that Solomon told the queen of Sheba.

Well, I never heard what it was; but I sometimes think he told her many things which you and I may learn from the Bible, for she had not had much opportunity of learning about God. Many years afterwards, our Lord Jesus commended the queen of Sheba for coming all that way to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

Solomon and the queen of Sheba gave each other costly gifts; and then she went home with a knowledge more precious to her than all the gifts.

With all Solomon's wisdom and knowledge, however, the last part of his history is sad.

He had married a great many wives, and some of them were women he ought not to have chosen, for they were worshippers of idols. And when he was old, he built places in which they might worship their false gods.

God was angry with him for this, and said that his son who should reign in Jerusalem after him should have only a part of the kingdom.

So the latter part of Solomon's reign was not so peaceful and happy as the beginning, because he had not served God fully, as David his father had done.

## XIV.

### ELIJAH.



SOLOMON'S son reigned in Jerusalem over only a part of the kingdom that had been his father's.

Some of the Israelites had chosen another king, who was not one of David's family at all. From that time the nation was divided into two parts.

The part that continued to have one of David's family for its king, and that had Jerusalem for its chief town, was called Judah, and the people were called Jews;—their children are called Jews still. The other part was called Israel, and their chief town, where their king lived, Samaria.

A few of the kings of Judah followed in the ways of King David, and did all they could while they lived to make the people do right; but some of them were bad.

None of the kings of Israel served God fully, and some of them were very bad indeed, and brought great troubles on the land.

One of these very bad kings was called Ahab. He built altars to worship the false god Baal; and he married a wicked woman called Jezebel, who put to death all the good men and prophets of God that she could lay hands on, for she was determined that every one should worship Baal.

The head-servant of Ahab's household was a good man called Obadiah. He saved a hundred prophets, and hid them in a cave, where he fed them and took care of them until the danger was past.

In the midst of all these wicked doings God sent a great and good prophet called Elijah to Ahab, to tell him that there should be neither rain



nor dew in the land for three years. This would be sure to cause a great famine, for nothing could grow in such long-continued dry weather.

God took care of his servant Elijah all through that famine; for he sent him to stay in a place where there was a brook of running water. All the time that Elijah lived there beside the brook God sent ravens to feed him. The ravens brought him bread and meat every morning, and bread and meat every evening, and he drank water from the brook.

The months passed on, and no rain came. The sun shone every day hot and scorching in a cloudless sky, and the grass withered, and no corn grew. At last Elijah's brook was dried up too.

Then God said to Elijah, Rise up, and go to Zarephath; for I have commanded a widow woman there to keep you.

Zarephath was in another country, near the Israelites; but the people who lived there were not Israelites.

Elijah went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, he saw the widow woman there gathering sticks; and he called to her and



OBADIAH FEEDING THE PROPHETS.



said, I pray you, fetch me a drink of water. As she was going for it, he said, I pray you, bring me also a piece of bread.

The widow answered, Indeed I have no bread. I have nothing in the world but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and I am just gathering a few sticks, that I may bake a cake for myself and my son. When that is eaten, we must die, for we have no more to eat.

Elijah said to her, Fear not: first make me a little cake, and bring it to me, and then bake for yourself and your son; for the Lord God of Israel has said that your meal and your oil shall last until he sends rain again upon the earth.

The widow went and did as Elijah requested, for she believed God's word that he had brought to her. She and her son and Elijah lived together for many months; and every day she found a little meal in the barrel and a little oil in the cruse—always enough for that day.

At the end of three years of dry, scorching weather, God said to Elijah, Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

Meanwhile Ahab had been seeking Elijah throughout all the land. He said it was Elijah who had brought the drought and the famine upon them, and he was furiously angry with him; and no doubt he meant to kill him when he could find him.

Nevertheless, at God's word, Elijah went fearlessly back to his own country. When he was come into it he found the land all parched and bare, for there was a sore famine there.

Ahab had sent good Obadiah to search the country for any spot in which there was still a little grass, that he might keep his mules alive.

Elijah met Obadiah in the way, and said to him, Go, tell your master that Elijah is here.

Obadiah feared to give the wicked king this message. He said, As soon as I am gone, God will take you away into some other place; and when the king cannot find you here, he will be angry with me, and perhaps kill me. But indeed I have feared God from my youth. Did you not hear how I saved a hundred prophets when Jezebel wanted to kill them? I beseech you, do not put me in such danger as to send me with that message to the king.



ELIJAH FED BY THE RAVENS.



Elijah answered, I will surely show myself to Ahab this day.

Obadiah then went and told Ahab.

As soon as Ahab heard the message, he set out to meet Elijah ; and when he saw him he asked angrily, Are you the man who troubles the land ?

Elijah answered, I have not troubled the land. It is you who have done so ; for you have disobeyed God, and have worshipped images of Baal. Now send and call the people together to Mount Carmel, and also all those prophets of Baal whom Jezebel feeds from her table.

Ahab sent and called the people together as Elijah desired ; for with all his anger against Elijah, he was afraid of him.

When a great number of people were gathered together, Elijah stood on Mount Carmel and spoke to them about the folly and wickedness of their ways ; for most of them, though they had not quite given up worshipping God, used to worship Baal too.

Some of them, I daresay, believed that Baal could help them ; and some, no doubt, only wished to please Queen Jezebel.

But Elijah said to them, How long will you halt between two opinions ? If the Lord be God, follow him : but if Baal, then follow him.

The people made no answer.

Then Elijah said, I stand here alone a prophet of the Lord, and Baal's prophets here are four hundred and fifty men. Let them take a bullock and offer it for a sacrifice to Baal, and put no fire under it ; and I will take a bullock and offer a sacrifice to the Lord, and put no fire under it. And let them pray to their gods, and I will pray to the Lord ; and that God who sends down fire from heaven to burn up his sacrifice, he is God—you shall follow him.

To this the people answered, Well said.

The prophets of Baal then built an altar. Taking a bullock, they killed it, and laid it upon the altar ; and called on Baal, and said, O Baal, hear us !

There was, however, no answer to that prayer. And they continued from morning until mid-day calling upon Baal, and leaping up and down beside their altar.

At mid-day Elijah said to them, Cry aloud : for he is a god ; either he is

talking, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep, and must be awaked.

The prophets of Baal cried louder than ever, O Baal, hear us! And they cut themselves with knives; for they believed that this would please their cruel god. They did so until the evening; but still there was no answer to their prayer.

Then Elijah called the people around him, and he built an altar of loose stones. He laid wood upon the altar, and cut in pieces the bullock which he had killed, and laid it upon the wood.

He dug a trench all round the altar, and made the people draw a great quantity of water and pour it over the sacrifice and over the wood, until it was all soaked. He also filled the trench with water.

When the time was come for him to offer his sacrifice, he drew near to this altar, and said: Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant... Hear me, O Lord, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God.

Then God sent fire from heaven which burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and dried up all the water that was in the trench about the altar.

When the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

Then Elijah bade the people take the prophets of Baal and kill them; for it was part of that law which God had given, that those who led his people away to worship idols should be put to death.

After the prophets of Baal had all been put to death, Elijah said to Ahab, Go, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

Ahab then went away to eat and drink; but Elijah went up to the top of the mountain, and fell down upon the earth before God in prayer.

Soon there rose a little cloud in the sky, about the size of a man's hand; and Elijah sent word to Ahab: Prepare your chariot, and get home, that the rain may not stop you.

Then came on one of those furious rain-storms that sometimes happen in that land. The sky was black with clouds, and there was a great rain.

The long, scorching, rainless years were over, and now the grass and corn would grow again.

When Jezebel heard what Elijah had done, she sent him a message, saying, Before this time to-morrow you too shall be dead, as the prophets of Baal are.

Elijah fled for his life, and got away into the wilderness. There, at the end of a day's journey, he sat down under a juniper tree, weary and out of heart; and he asked God to let him die.

But God, who knew how weary and sad he was, gave him food and drink, and sent an angel to him with loving words to comfort him, and sent him sweet sleep to rest him. After he was rested and refreshed, God spoke to him and said, What are you doing here, Elijah?

Elijah told all the trouble that was in his heart: how he was grieved because the Israelites had forsaken God, and thrown down his altars, and disobeyed his laws, and killed his prophets. And I only am left, said Elijah; and they want to kill me too, because I have tried to turn them back to the true God.

But God told him that there were still seven thousand people in Israel that had never bowed down to Baal. He also bade him go and anoint a young man called Elisha to be a prophet, who should speak God's words to the people after he himself was taken away from them.

XV.

ELISHA.



ELIJAH went, as God had directed him, to seek the man who should be prophet in his place.

He found Elisha ploughing in a field; and the great prophet took off his mantle and threw it over the shoulders of the man whom God had chosen to be prophet after him.

Elisha knew then that he was called to follow the great prophet and to be with him. He left his oxen standing in the furrow, and ran after Elijah, and said, I pray you, let me go and kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.

From that time Elisha became Elijah's companion. He waited upon him, and no doubt he learned much from God's great prophet while he was with him.

At last God's time came to take his servant away from all the troubles of that wicked land. Yet Elijah was not to die.

One day he and Elisha left the place where they were staying, and went together toward the Jordan.

Elisha knew that it was the last day he should spend with his beloved teacher in this world, and he was determined to stay with him to the last.

When they got to the Jordan, Elijah took off his mantle, and having wrapped it together, he struck the water with it. By this means the stream was divided, and they passed over on dry ground to the other side.

After that, Elijah said, Tell me what I shall do for you before I am taken away from you.

Elisha answered, I pray you, let a double portion of your spirit be given to me.

Elijah said, You have asked a hard thing; but if you see me when I am taken up, you shall have it.

So they went on, talking together as they went, both knowing that they should not speak with each other in this world any more.

As they talked, there came a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them from each other. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.



ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN.

When Elisha saw it, he cried, My father, my father! And he mourned because he saw Elijah no more. He then took up Elijah's mantle that had fallen from him, and returned alone by the way they had come.

When he reached the Jordan, he too struck the water with Elijah's mantle, saying, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and again the waters were parted.

At Jericho there was a school where young men lived and learned under the care of the great prophets. It was called the "School of the Prophets."



The scholars from this school came out to meet Elisha, and when they saw him returning alone, they knew he was now a great prophet. They said, The spirit of Elijah rests upon Elisha; and they bowed before him to show that they now considered him their master.

Then they asked Elisha to let them send fifty strong men to search for Elijah through the lonely places beyond the river.

Elisha said, Do not send. But when they begged hard of him to allow them, he consented. The men searched for three days, but they could not find Elijah, for God had taken him up into heaven.

Elisha stayed for a while with these young men, and then he went on to Bethel.

Now there were people at Bethel who still mocked at God and his prophets. They had suffered in the famine that came upon the land for the people's sins; they knew how God had afterwards sent rain when Elijah prayed for it; and they had seen how God answered the prayer of Elijah by sending fire from heaven to burn up his sacrifice. They had seen also many other wonderful things that ought to have taught them at least to fear God and to honour his prophets. But they would not learn; and they had children whom they were training in the same bad ways.

I think these children must have heard their parents mocking at the story of Elijah being taken up into heaven, for when they saw Elisha they came out to mock him, saying, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And there came two bears out of the wood and tore forty-two of those children who mocked at Elisha.

This was indeed a very terrible lesson; but I know not whether the wicked parents of those ill-trained children took even this to heart, and honoured the prophets of God more after that time. I hope they did.

But if God punishes people who mock at his messengers and ill-treat them, he sends great blessings to those who are kind to them.

There was a woman who used to bring Elisha to her house and make him dine with her whenever he passed that way. She was so pleased to have God's holy prophet in her house that she asked her husband to let her

prepare a little room and keep it specially for Elisha, that he might stay there whenever he came to that town.

Elisha wished to do something to show his thankfulness to the good woman who took such care of him. He tried to think of something she would like him to do for her. She was rich; she seemed to have everything she could wish for; but he remembered she had no child.

In those times people thought it very sad indeed to have no child. Elisha therefore asked God to give these good people a son. When he knew that God would do that, he sent for the woman, and told her that she should soon have a little boy.

This was such good news she hardly knew how to believe it; but it came true, and that little boy was very precious indeed to his parents.

One day, when the child was big enough to run about in the fields, he went out to his father to a field where men were reaping corn. Soon the heat of the sun made the little fellow very sick, and his head ached badly. They carried him in to his mother, and he lay in her lap till mid-day, and then he died.

This was a sore trouble; but the mother did not yet despair. She believed that God, who had given her this little son, could even give him back to her again.

Without telling even the father that their child was dead, she carried his little body up to Elisha's room. And when she had laid it upon the bed, she called for an ass, and rode off as fast as she could to Elisha's home.

When the prophet came to meet her, she threw herself on the ground before him and laid hold of his feet. He saw she was in great trouble, but God had not shown him what it was.

When she had told him, he hastened back with her to her home. There he shut himself up in the little chamber alone, with the cold, stiff body of the boy, and prayed to God to send life into it again. Then he went and lay upon the body, placing his mouth upon the mouth of the child, and his hands upon the child's hands; and the flesh of the child grew warm, but he did not stir or open his eyes.

Elisha now left him for a little while. Again he returned, and stretched

himself upon the body as before, and the child sneezed, and opened his eyes.

Elisha sent for the mother, and gave her her son again, warm and living, into her arms.

We are told of many miracles that were done by Elisha, and nearly all of them were kind and gentle acts, like those that our Lord Jesus did when he came.

All the people in the land must have heard of Elisha, and there were some people in other lands who heard of him too.

There was a little girl who was carried away by the Syrians out of the land of Israel; for the Syrians were at that time at war with the Israelites. When she was brought into Syria, the general of the Syrian army gave her to his wife to be her maid.

It was a sad case for a little Israelite girl to be carried off to become a servant to these strangers, who were also heathen people. Yet she did a great deal of good for them.

Naaman, the general in whose house she lived, was a brave, clever soldier, but he had taken a terrible disease called leprosy.

Leprosy is a disease that sometimes becomes very bad indeed, and then people die of it, a slow, painful death. Even when it is not so bad as that, it covers the skin with hard white scales, so that it is nasty to look at.

One day the little Israelite girl said to her mistress, How I wish my master were with the prophet that is in my country! He would soon cure him of his leprosy.

When Naaman heard this, he resolved to try if this prophet could cure him. He went to the king of Israel, who sent him to Elisha. So he came in his chariot to Elisha's house, and a great many men mounted on horses came with him, and they all stopped before Elisha's door.

Elisha sent out a messenger to him, saying, Go, wash seven times in Jordan, and your flesh shall become sound again, and you shall be cured.

Naaman did not at all like this message. He thought Elisha had not treated him with respect enough in sending him a message by his servant. He had expected that the prophet would at least come out himself and lay

his hand on the leprous spot and pray over it. Besides, he did not see what good it would do him to wash in the Jordan. He said, if washing in water could cure leprosy, he had rivers near his own home that were better than the Jordan. So he turned, and went away in a rage.

But his servants came to him, and said, If the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? Why not then try this simple thing he has told you to do?

Naaman was persuaded. He went to the Jordan, and dipped himself seven times in the water, and his flesh became clean and healthy like the flesh of a little child, for he was cured.

Full of joy and gratitude, he returned to thank Elisha. This time Elisha came out to speak with him; and Naaman said, Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but your God. Will you accept a gift from me?

Elisha, however, would take no gift. He did not want this Syrian to think that he could pay for God's goodness to him.

Naaman then asked to be allowed to take with him, from the land of Israel, as much earth as two mules could carry, that he might make an altar with it in his own land, and offer sacrifices to the Lord; for he said he would no longer worship any other god. When he had taken this, he set out to go home.

Gehazi, Elisha's servant, had heard his master refuse the beautiful and costly gifts that Naaman offered. He thought it a great pity such beautiful things should go back to Syria. He wished to have some of them for himself; and he did not remember, perhaps he did not believe, that to do right and to please God is better than silver and gold, or anything that silver and gold can buy. So he ran after the Syrian.

When Naaman saw Gehazi running, he came down out of his chariot to meet him, and asked him, Is all well?

Gehazi answered, All is well; but my master sent me after you, because two young men of the sons of the prophets have just come to him, and he would like you to give him for them a talent of silver and two suits of clothes.

Naaman was quite pleased to think that he could after all give some-

thing to Elisha. He said, Pray take two talents of silver. He also sent two of his servants to carry the things to Elisha's house.

Gehazi did not want Elisha to know what he had done; so before the men came up to the door he took the things from them.

When he had hidden his ill-gotten goods, he went in and stood before his master as usual—very well satisfied, I daresay, with what he had done; for now he was quite rich, and he did not mind being a liar and a thief so long as nobody knew it.

Elisha said, Where have you been, Gehazi?

Gehazi answered, Your servant went nowhere.

Elisha was a prophet, and knew what Gehazi had done. He said, Did not my heart go with you when the man came down out of his chariot to meet you? Then he rebuked him severely for his covetousness and his lying, and he said, You shall now have the leprosy that Naaman was cured of.

So Gehazi went out from his master's presence white with leprosy.

Every one who does as Gehazi did—who is satisfied to be a liar and a thief, if he can only be a little richer for it—though his skin may look fresh and fair as ever, yet he will surely have leprosy in his soul; his mind will become diseased and bad; and only our Saviour Jesus can ever make it clean again.

## XVI.

### DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS.



O you remember what I told you about the Israelites being divided into two kingdoms? Those who always had one of David's family for their king were called Jews, and only the other part of the nation were called Israelites.

It is very sad to tell you how both the Jews and the Israelites were constantly disobeying God and turning away from him. Sometimes I think I would like to tell you only about the good people; but I dare not write these histories otherwise than as they are in the Bible, and after all it would never do for you to suppose that there are only good people in the world.

Both the Jews and the Israelites did many bad things. Again and again they built altars to worship false gods.

At last that thing happened to them which Moses had long ago told them would happen if they persisted in disobeying God. Their enemies came and destroyed their towns, and threw down their houses, and carried the people away into a strange land.

This happened first to the Israelites, and they have never yet come back again to their own land.

Afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his soldiers. They broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and took it, and killed great numbers of the people. They also pulled down the beautiful temple, and carried off all the gold and the silver and the precious things that were found in it.

All the people who were not killed were carried away captives to Babylon. The wicked king who was then reigning in Jerusalem was also taken prisoner; and Nebuchadnezzar chained him with iron chains, and put him into a prison in Babylon. But the costly vessels of gold and silver that he had taken out of the temple, these Nebuchadnezzar brought into the house of his god.

The land that God had given to his people was now waste and desolate, with its towns all destroyed, and hardly any people left in it. And the Jews were told by their prophets that they must live in Babylon for seventy years.

When Nebuchadnezzar was come to Babylon with all these captives, he desired one of his officers to choose from among them a certain number of youths who were handsome and clever, and who were already good scholars, that they might be trained for three years in the king's palace, and learn everything that the wisest men in Babylon could teach them.

At the end of the three years the king meant to have these young men brought into his presence, that they might be always near him, to tell him anything he wanted to know.

The king ordered that these youths should be fed with the same food and wine that were served at his own table. This food and wine were of the best and costliest kind, you may be sure; but before being placed on the king's table, a portion of the food was offered to his false gods, and every one who ate of it was considered to be thanking those gods for his food and drink.

There was one of those Jewish youths who resolved that he would not sin against God by eating the king's meat, for which the idols had been thanked. This young man's name was Daniel. He therefore asked the officer who took care of them not to give him and his three companions any of the king's meat and wine.

This officer liked Daniel, and he wished to please him; but he was afraid of the king. He said that if the king saw the youths who were under his care looking thin and poorly fed, he would be angry with him, and perhaps order his head to be cut off; for those kings of Babylon thought very little of cutting off the heads of people who displeased them.

Daniel said, Try us for ten days: during that time give us nothing but pulse and water; then judge if we look any worse than those who have been eating the king's meat. After that, do as you think best about it.



DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS LIVING ON PULSE AND WATER.

The officer consented, and at the end of the ten days these four young men were fairer and fatter than those who had been fed from the king's



table. After that they were not asked to eat any more of the king's meat, but every day they got pulse and water.

Pulse means such things as dried beans or peas,—not a very nice kind of food, my little friends; and I think people would get very tired of it if they never ate anything else, especially when there were all sorts of dainties to be had for the asking.

It is better, however, to eat coarse food than to disobey God. These Jewish youths knew that; and God gave them better things than the dainties they had refused for his sake. He gave them wisdom and knowledge, and great skill in learning all those things which they were taught.

At the end of the three years, when they were brought before the king, he found them wiser than all their teachers. Not only had they learned all that the wise men of Babylon could teach them, but God himself had taught them.

God made Daniel his prophet, and showed him many things that were to happen at a future time.

One night King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which troubled him. He felt sure that it had a meaning, and he sent for the wise men of Babylon to tell him what the meaning of the dream was.

They said, O king, tell your servants the dream, and we will tell you the meaning of it.

Nebuchadnezzar answered, I have forgotten it; therefore you must tell me the dream and the meaning too. If you tell me what the dream was, then I shall believe that you know the meaning, and I will give you rewards and great honour. If you cannot tell me the dream, I don't believe you can tell the meaning of it; you are only liars who pretend to know what is going to happen, and you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be thrown down.

The wise men answered, There is no one in the world who could tell what you ask; only the gods could answer such a question. No king ever before required his wise men to tell him anything like that.

Nebuchadnezzar was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men in Babylon should be put to death.

Some of the king's guards were sent to take Daniel and his companions, that they too might be put to death. But Daniel said that if the king would give him a little time, he would tell him all he wanted to know.

The king consented to this; and Daniel and his three companions prayed to God to show them this secret, so that they might not all be destroyed.

That night God showed his prophet Daniel the king's dream and the meaning of it.

Daniel thanked God and praised him. Then he asked to be brought before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar asked him, Are you able to tell me the dream that I had, and the meaning of it?

Daniel answered, There is a God in heaven who knows everything, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar by a dream what is going to happen in the world.

Then he told the king what he had seen in his dream. When he came to tell the meaning of it, it was all about things that should happen in the world years and years after the people then living had passed away.

All has come true since, except just the last part of it, which has not all happened yet; but it will happen some day, when our Saviour Jesus rules over all the kingdoms of this world.

When Nebuchadnezzar had heard Daniel tell the dream and its wonderful meaning, he said, Truly your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and One who knows all secrets. He has shown you this secret.

The king gave Daniel great gifts, and made him ruler over the affairs of Babylon, and head of all the wise men.

Daniel's three companions were also made great men. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. You shall now hear something that happened to them.

Nebuchadnezzar made a great image of gold, and set it up in a plain near Babylon. He called together all the great men of his kingdom to the place where the golden image was set up. There a man read to them in a loud voice the order that the king had given. It was this:—



DANIEL TELLING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HIS DREAM.

Unto you it is commanded, O people, that as soon as you hear a band playing upon all kinds of instruments of music, you shall all at that moment fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship it shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar's lords and great men, when they heard the band of

music, fell down and worshipped, as the king had commanded,—all except those Jews who would worship God only.

Then some people came to Nebuchadnezzar and said, O king, there are certain Jews whom you have made rulers over your affairs—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men have not obeyed you. They do not serve your gods, nor worship your golden image.

Nebuchadnezzar, in a great rage, sent for those men, and asked them if what he had heard of them was true. And he said, If you will not obey me, you shall be thrown into a burning fiery furnace; and what God is there who can save you out of that?

They answered, O Nebuchadnezzar, our God whom we serve is able to save us out of the furnace, and he *will* deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, yet we will not serve your gods, nor worship your golden image.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was very furious, for people rarely dared to speak to him in this way. He commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than usual, and that those three men should be cast into it.

The strongest soldiers in the king's army bound Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and threw them into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. The flame was so fierce that the soldiers were killed by the great heat.

But God's servants were not killed, nor hurt at all, though they had been cast into the midst of it.

After they had been thrown in, the king rose up frightened and astonished, and he said, Did we not cast three men bound into the furnace? But now I see four men, loose and unhurt, walking in the midst of the furnace, and the fourth man is grand and beautiful like a god.\*

Going to the door of the burning fiery furnace, he cried out, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come here!

Then those three men came out from the midst of the fire, and the king

\* "The form of the fourth is like a son of the gods." (See "Speaker's Commentary" on Dan. iii. 25.)



SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

and all his lords saw that they had not been hurt ; there was not a hair of their head singed, and their clothes were not scorched.

And Nebuchadnezzar said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego ; for he has sent his angel, and saved his servants who trusted in him, and who gave their bodies to be burned, rather than worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a law, that if any one speak

against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that man shall be cut in pieces, and his house shall be pulled down; for there is no other God that can save like this.

After this the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego greater honours than they had before enjoyed.

## XVII.

### DANIEL UNDER DARIUS.



OME time after Nebuchadnezzar was dead his grandson Belshazzar was king of Babylon.

Though Nebuchadnezzar had learned before he died that all the earth belongs to God, and that there is nothing so good as to serve and obey him, and all the people in Babylon had heard how God had taught him that lesson, yet Belshazzar cared nothing at all about the matter. Indeed, he cared very little for anything, except eating and drinking and making merry.

He was not even a good soldier, as Nebuchadnezzar had been; and when a great army of his enemies surrounded Babylon, and were trying with all their might to get into it, he went on feasting more than ever, for he said no enemy could ever break into the great city of Babylon, whose walls were so high and strong.

One night, when he had made a feast for his lords and his princes, he sent for those vessels of gold and silver that had been holy vessels in God's temple at Jerusalem.

When these had been brought, the wicked Belshazzar and all his gay lords and ladies drank wine out of them; and as they drank they praised their idols that were made of gold and of silver, and of brass and wood and stone.

In the midst of this wicked feasting Belshazzar's face grew pale, and he trembled with fear; for on the wall opposite him he saw fingers writing some strange mysterious words of which he knew not the meaning.

Then he cried aloud to his lords to bring in the wise men of Babylon, that they might tell him what those terrible words meant. Whoever reads them, said he, shall be dressed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and be made the third ruler in the kingdom.

The wise men came, but they could not read the writing on the wall, nor tell at all what it meant; and the king and all his lords were more terrified than ever, and cared nothing now for their feasting.

Then the queen said, O king, let not this trouble you. There is a man in your kingdom who can read the words—a man in whom was found such wisdom and knowledge that Nebuchadnezzar, your grandfather, made him ruler over all the wise men in Babylon. Let him be called.

Daniel was therefore brought in, and the king told him that if he could read that writing, and tell the meaning of it, then he should be clothed in scarlet, and have a gold chain about his neck, and be the third ruler in Babylon.

Daniel answered, Let your gifts remain with you, and give your rewards to another. Yet I will read what is written, and tell you the meaning of it:—

O king, the most high God made Nebuchadnezzar a very great king, and gave him power over many people; but he taught him to know that God rules all kingdoms, and sets whom he pleases over them. And you, O Belshazzar, though you knew all that happened to your grandfather, and all that God taught him, you have not humbled your heart, but have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house to your feast, and you have drunk wine out of them. And you have praised your gods of silver and gold, and brass and iron, and wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand your life is you have not worshipped. Therefore he sent this hand which wrote the words that you have seen.

Daniel then read those strange and terrible words, and said, The meaning of the words is this: God has brought your kingdom to an end. You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting. God has divided your kingdom, and given it to your enemies.





THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

When Daniel had said this the king made his lords clothe him in scarlet, and put a golden chain on his neck, and declare that he was the third greatest man in the kingdom.

That night the enemy's army got into the strong proud city, and Belshazzar was killed, and a king called Darius took the kingdom of Babylon for his own.

King Darius soon found out that Daniel was the wisest and best man in his kingdom, and he made much of him accordingly. When he set princes over the different parts of his great kingdom, he gave Daniel authority over them all.

Those princes envied Daniel, and tried to find some fault in him, that they might complain of him to the king. But they could find none; and they said to one another, We shall not find anything to say against Daniel, unless it be something about worshipping his God.

They knew that Daniel prayed to God three times every day. He used to kneel down in his chamber with his face turned towards Jerusalem; for though it was many, many miles away, and he had not seen it since he was very young, he knew that God had promised to bring the Jews back again to their old home at the end of seventy years, and it comforted him to say his prayers looking towards the place where God's house had been.

Daniel's enemies therefore made this plan to get him into trouble: they asked King Darius to make a law that for thirty days no one in the kingdom should make prayer to any God or man except to the king; and that if any one should ask anything from any other god or man, he should be thrown into the den of lions.

Darius was foolish enough to consent to this law. When he had signed it and sealed it he could not alter it for any one; for it was a rule with these people that when the king made a law it could not be altered.

Daniel, however, prayed to God just the same as before. As he did so his enemies saw him kneeling in his chamber with the windows open that looked towards Jerusalem; and they told the king, and said, Daniel, who is one of these captive Jews, does not obey you, O king. He does not mind the law that you have made. He prays to his God three times every day.

When the king heard this he was very sorry for having made that law. He loved Daniel greatly; he was so wise and useful, and so faithful to him.

All that day he tried to find some way of saving him; but the princes reminded him that he could not alter a law which he had made. Then he commanded that Daniel should be thrown into the den of lions, and he said to him, Your God whom you serve continually will save you.



DANIEL PRAYING.

Daniel was therefore thrown in among the fierce lions, and a great stone was laid on the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own seal, which might not be broken without his leave.

Then King Darius returned to his palace. But he ate no food that evening, neither would he have any music played for him, nor could he fall asleep all that night.

Early in the morning he went to the mouth of the lions' den, and called to Daniel ; and his voice was sad as he called, for he feared that Daniel was not alive to answer. He said, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to save you from the lions ?

Daniel replied from within the den, O king, live for ever. My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me ; for he knows I have not sinned, neither have I done any wrong to you, O king.

Darius was glad, and commanded them to take Daniel out of the den. No hurt was found upon him, for God in whom he trusted had taken care of him.

Then the king commanded that the men who had plotted against Daniel should be thrown into the den.

Those kings of Babylon were fierce and cruel ; and though Darius was not so bad as many, yet he was not satisfied to punish the offenders only, as all kings should, but he ordered their families also to be thrown to the lions.



DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS.

The lions sprang upon them and tore them in pieces, and devoured them, before ever they reached the bottom of the den.

Then King Darius wrote a letter and sent it to all the countries that he ruled over. And this was in the letter that he wrote:—

I make a law, That in every part of my kingdom men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and remains for ever. His kingdom shall not be destroyed, and he shall rule for ever. He delivers and saves; he works signs and wonders in the earth; and he has saved Daniel from the strength of the lions.

After that Daniel prospered during all the days of Darius, and also in the days of the king who came after him.

The king who reigned after Darius sent many of the Jews back to their own land, and bade them build again the temple of God at Jerusalem. He gave them back those vessels of silver and gold that had been taken out of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The seventy years of captivity were now over, and God had put it into the heart of King Cyrus to send his people back to their own land.

THE END.

72





1





